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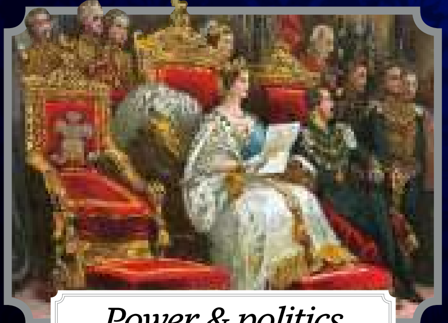
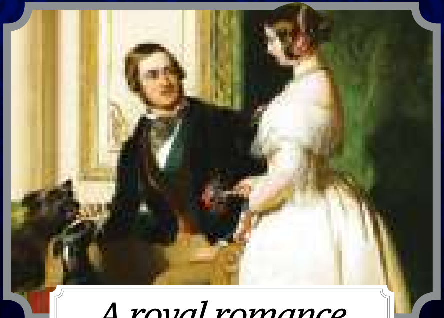
QUEEN VICTORIA

Meet the woman behind the crown who ruled an empire and defined an era



Power & politics



A royal romance

Victoria's secrets

Digital Edition

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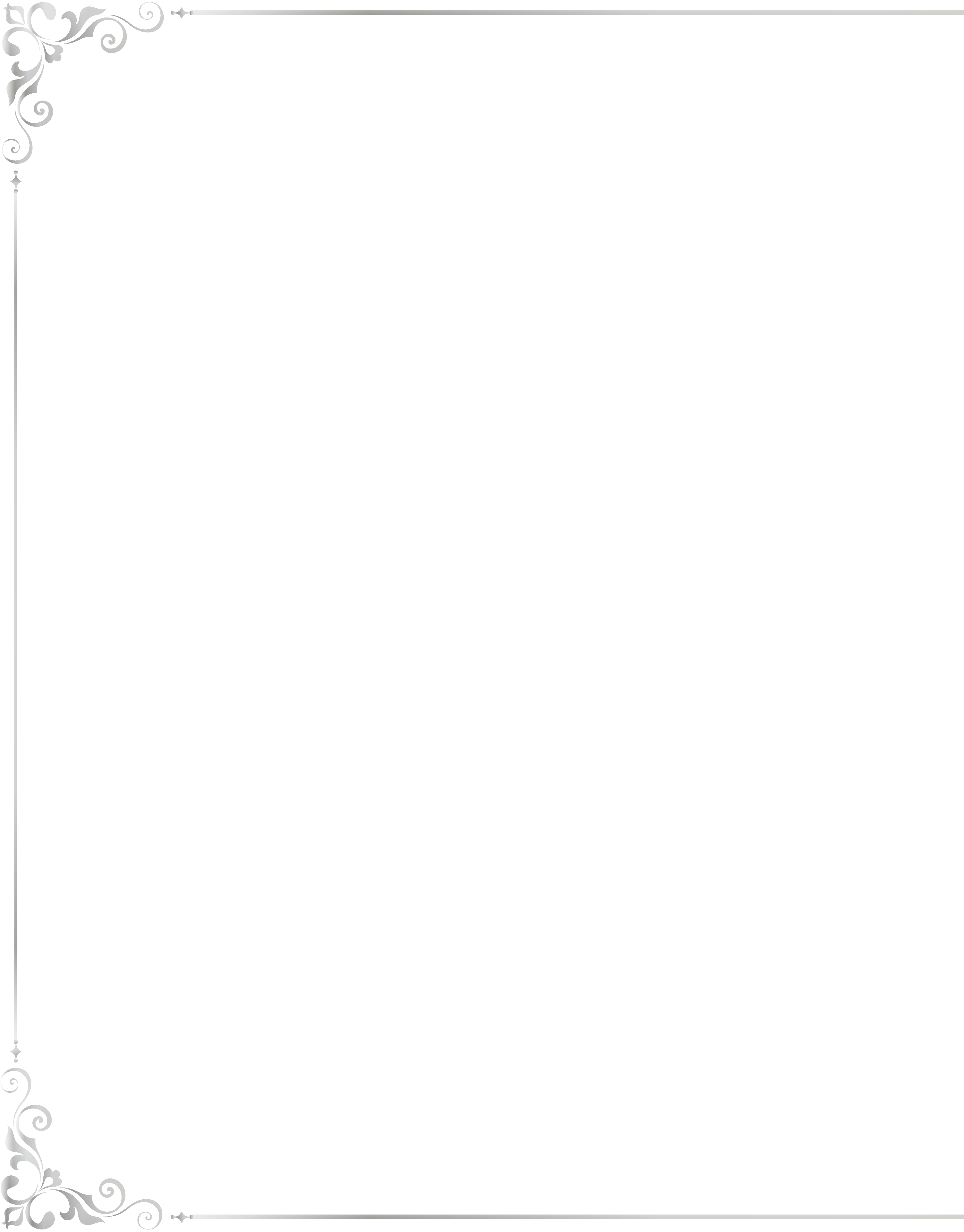

Welcome to the book of

QUEEN VICTORIA

Upon her death on 22 January 1901, Queen Victoria was the longest-reigning monarch in British history. During her six-decade rule Victoria witnessed a period of great change, from building the biggest empire the world has ever known to the technological marvels of the Industrial Revolution. But who was the woman beneath the crown? Discover the story of this remarkable queen, meet the man who captured her heart, and learn how the mother of nine balanced royal duty with family life. Find out how Victoria influenced the evolution of British politics and see how her legacy as the 'Grandmother of Europe' lives on to this day...

FUTURE

QUEEN VICTORIA

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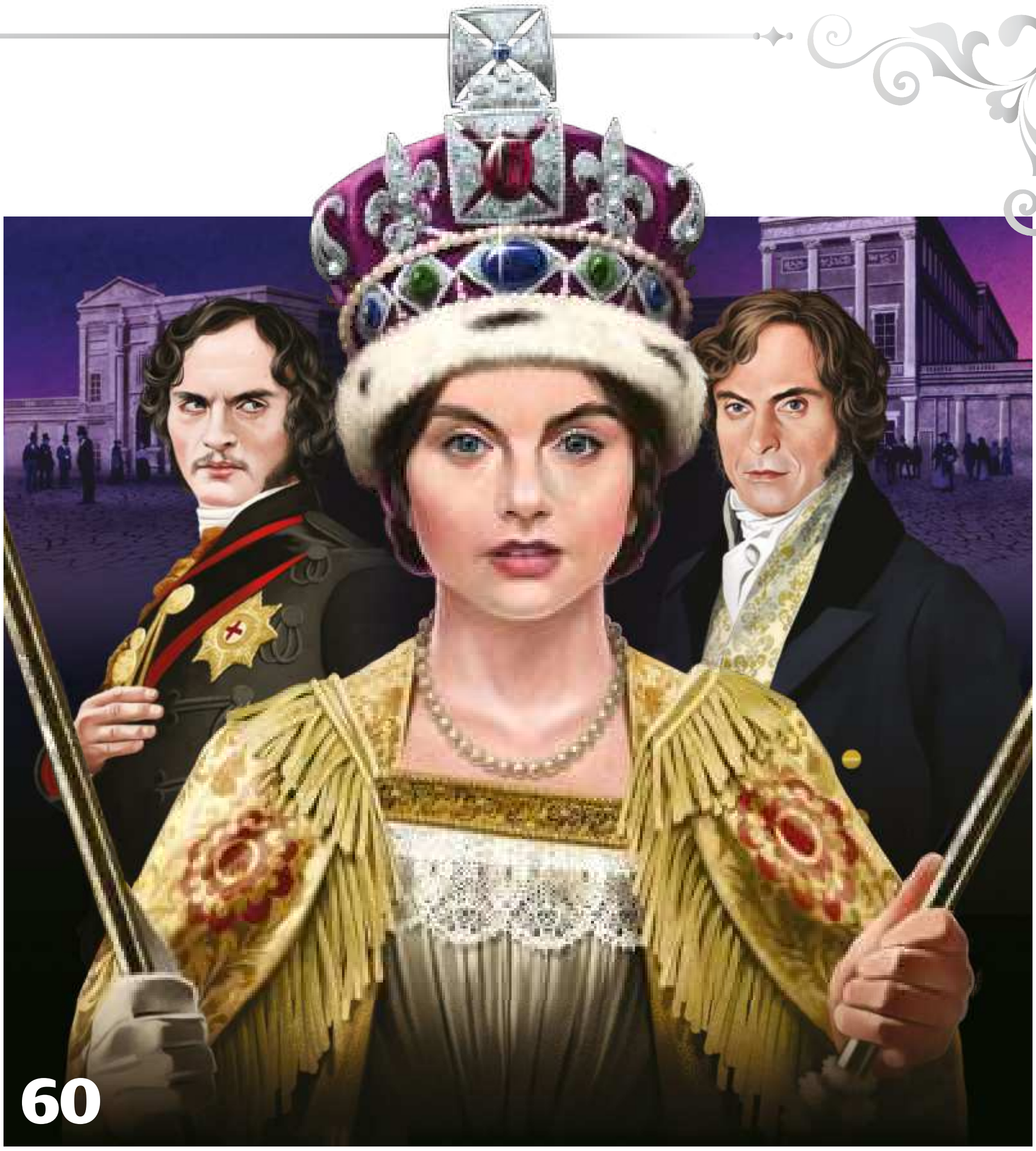

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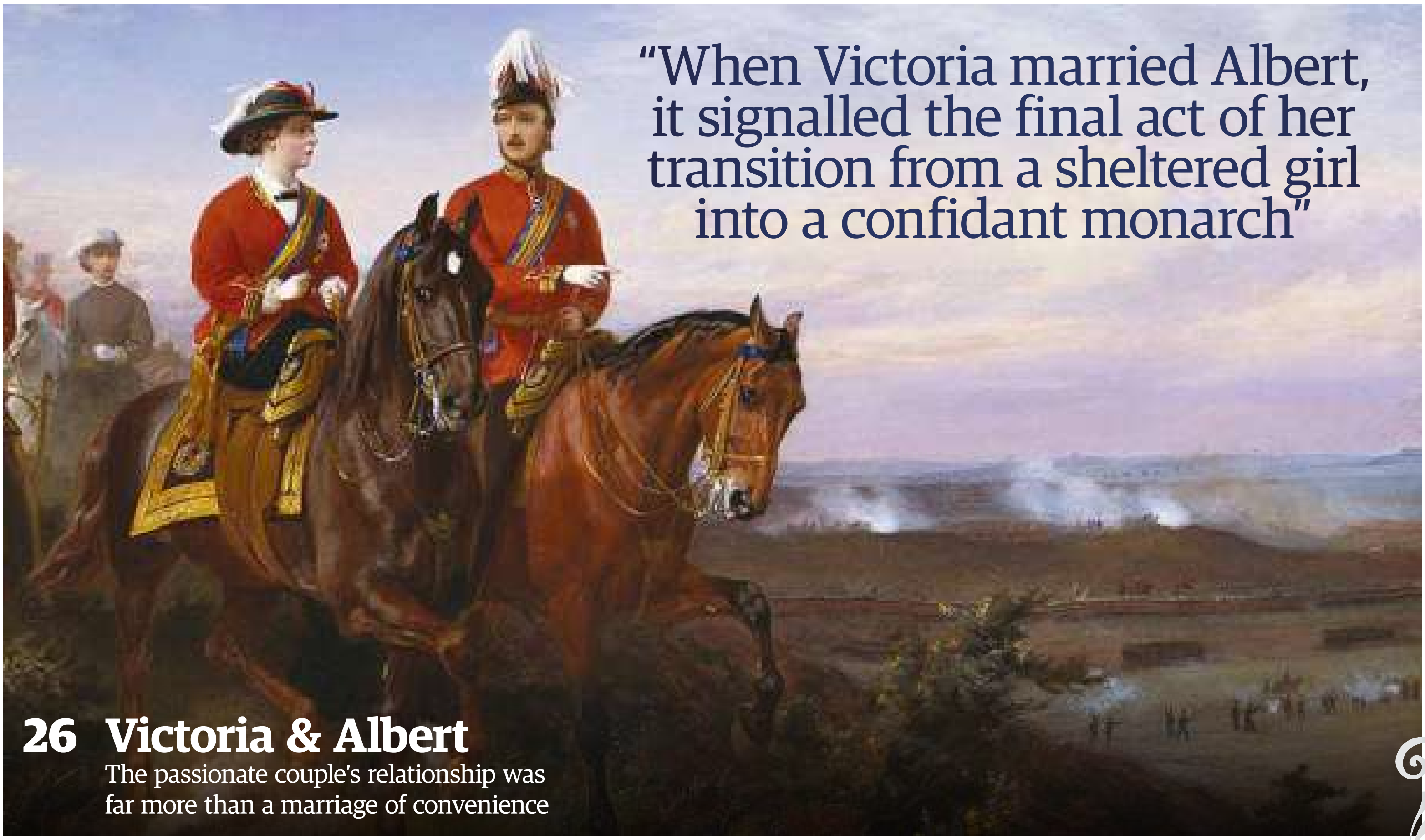
> "When Victoria married Albert, it signalled the final act of her transition from a sheltered girl into a confidant monarch"



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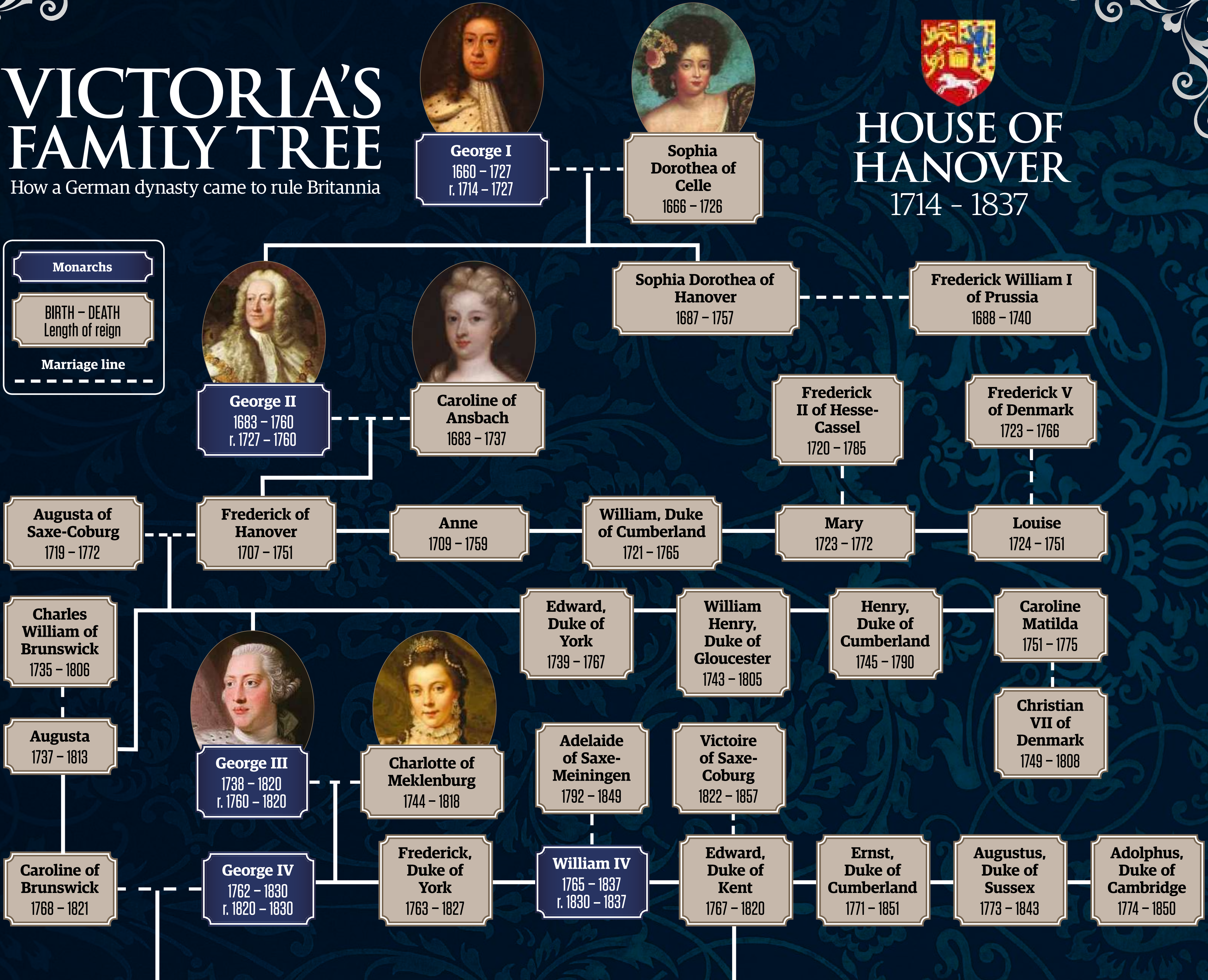
The passionate couple's relationship was far more than a marriage of convenience

VICTORIA'S FAMILY TREE

How a German dynasty came to rule Britannia

HOUSE OF HANOVER

1714 - 1837



Monarchs

BIRTH – DEATH
Length of reign

Marriage line

George I
1660 – 1727
r. 1714 – 1727

Sophia Dorothea of Celle
1666 – 1726

George II
1683 – 1760
r. 1727 – 1760

Caroline of Ansbach
1683 – 1737

Sophia Dorothea of Hanover
1687 – 1757

Frederick William I of Prussia
1688 – 1740

Frederick II of Hesse-Cassel
1720 – 1785

Frederick V of Denmark
1723 – 1766

Augusta of Saxe-Coburg
1719 – 1772

Frederick of Hanover
1707 – 1751

Anne
1709 – 1759

William, Duke of Cumberland
1721 – 1765

Mary
1723 – 1772

Louise
1724 – 1751

Charles William of Brunswick
1735 – 1806

Edward, Duke of York
1739 – 1767

William Henry, Duke of Gloucester
1743 – 1805

Henry, Duke of Cumberland
1745 – 1790

Caroline Matilda
1751 – 1775

Augusta
1737 – 1813

George III
1738 – 1820
r. 1760 – 1820

Charlotte of Meklenburg
1744 – 1818

Adelaide of Saxe-Meiningen
1792 – 1849

Victoire of Saxe-Coburg
1822 – 1857

Christian VII of Denmark
1749 – 1808

Caroline of Brunswick
1768 – 1821

George IV
1762 – 1830
r. 1820 – 1830

Frederick, Duke of York
1763 – 1827

William IV
1765 – 1837
r. 1830 – 1837

Edward, Duke of Kent
1767 – 1820

Ernst, Duke of Cumberland
1771 – 1851

Augustus, Duke of Sussex
1773 – 1843

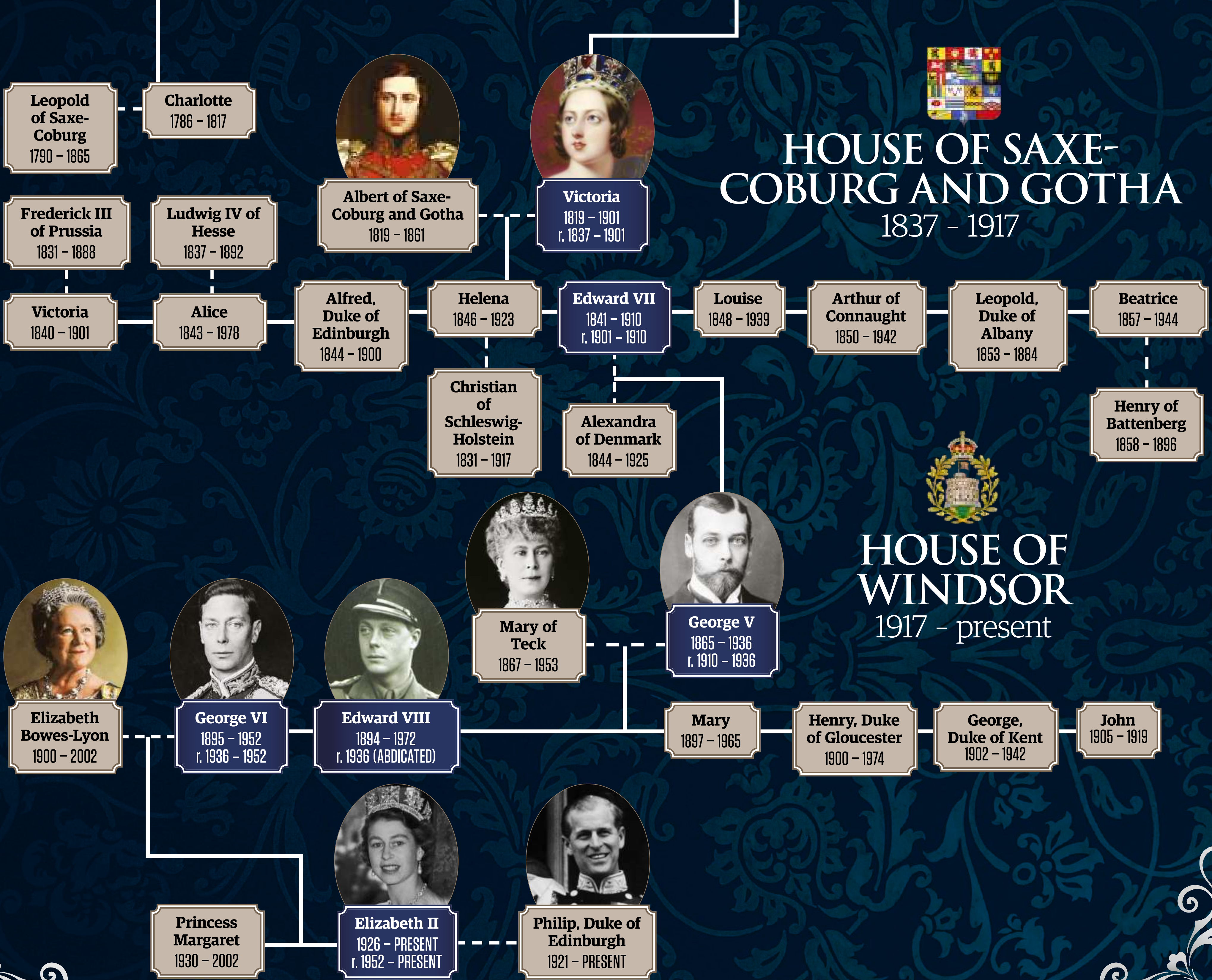
Adolphus, Duke of Cambridge
1774 – 1850

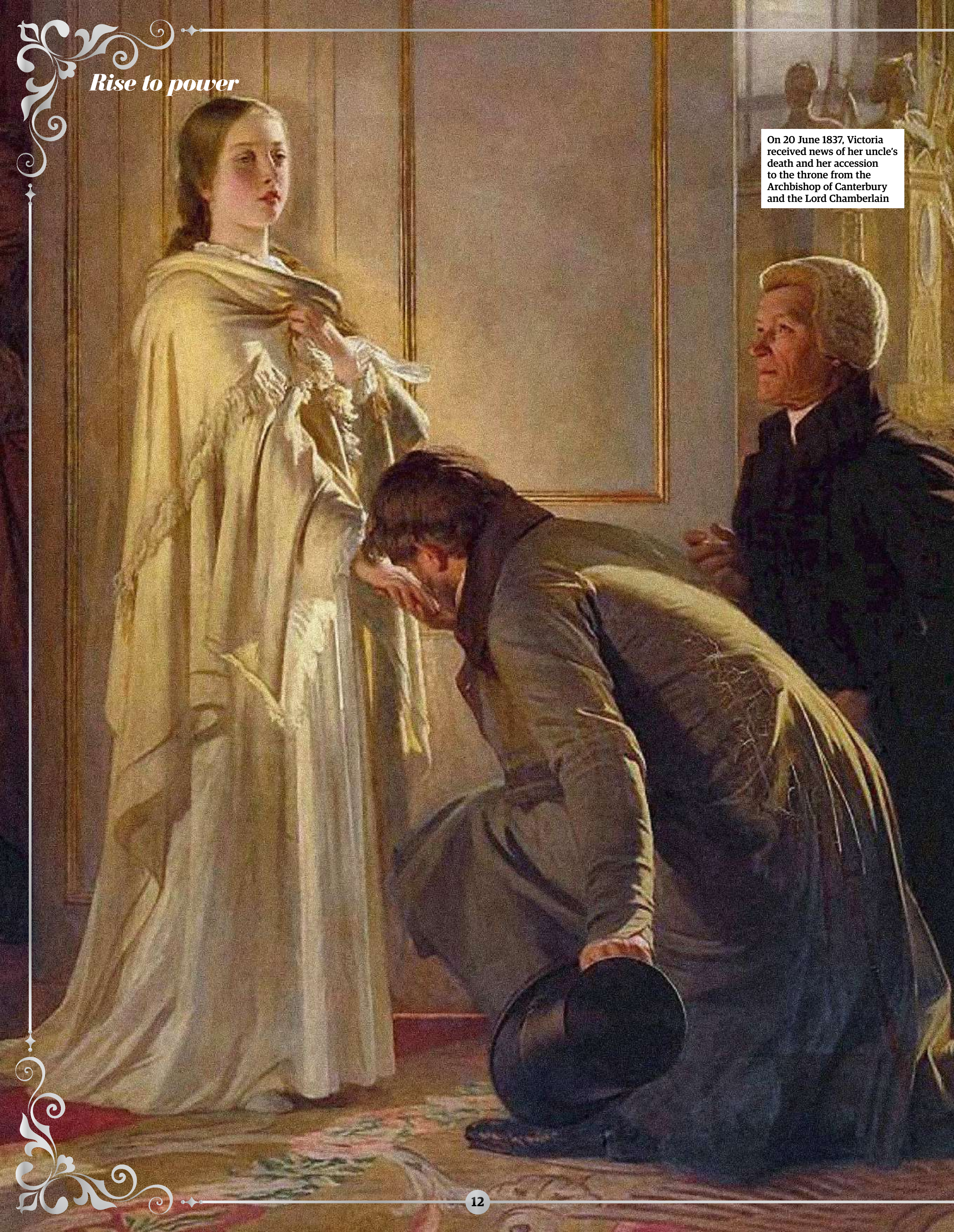
HOUSE OF SAXE-COBURG AND GOTHA

1837 - 1917

HOUSE OF WINDSOR

1917 - present


Leopold of Saxe-Coburg 1790 – 1865
Charlotte 1786 – 1817
Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha 1819 – 1861
Victoria 1819 – 1901 r. 1837 – 1901
Frederick III of Prussia 1831 – 1888
Ludwig IV of Hesse 1837 – 1892
Victoria 1840 – 1901
Alice 1843 – 1978
Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh 1844 – 1900
Helena 1846 – 1923
Edward VII 1841 – 1910 r. 1901 – 1910
Louise 1848 – 1939
Arthur of Connaught 1850 – 1942
Leopold, Duke of Albany 1853 – 1884
Beatrice 1857 – 1944
Christian of Schleswig-Holstein 1831 – 1917
Alexandra of Denmark 1844 – 1925
Henry of Battenberg 1858 – 1896
Mary of Teck 1867 – 1953
George V 1865 – 1936 r. 1910 – 1936
Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon 1900 – 2002
George VI 1895 – 1952 r. 1936 – 1952
Edward VIII 1894 – 1972 r. 1936 (ABDICATED)
Mary 1897 – 1965
Henry, Duke of Gloucester 1900 – 1974
George, Duke of Kent 1902 – 1942
John 1905 – 1919
Princess Margaret 1930 – 2002
Elizabeth II 1926 – PRESENT r. 1952 – PRESENT
Philip, Duke of Edinburgh 1921 – PRESENT



On 20 June 1837, Victoria received news of her uncle's death and her accession to the throne from the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Lord Chamberlain

THE SUCCESSION CRISIS

Within 18 years, Victoria overcame schemes and scandals to secure her place as queen. But how did an unlikely young girl become one of the nation's most successful monarchs?

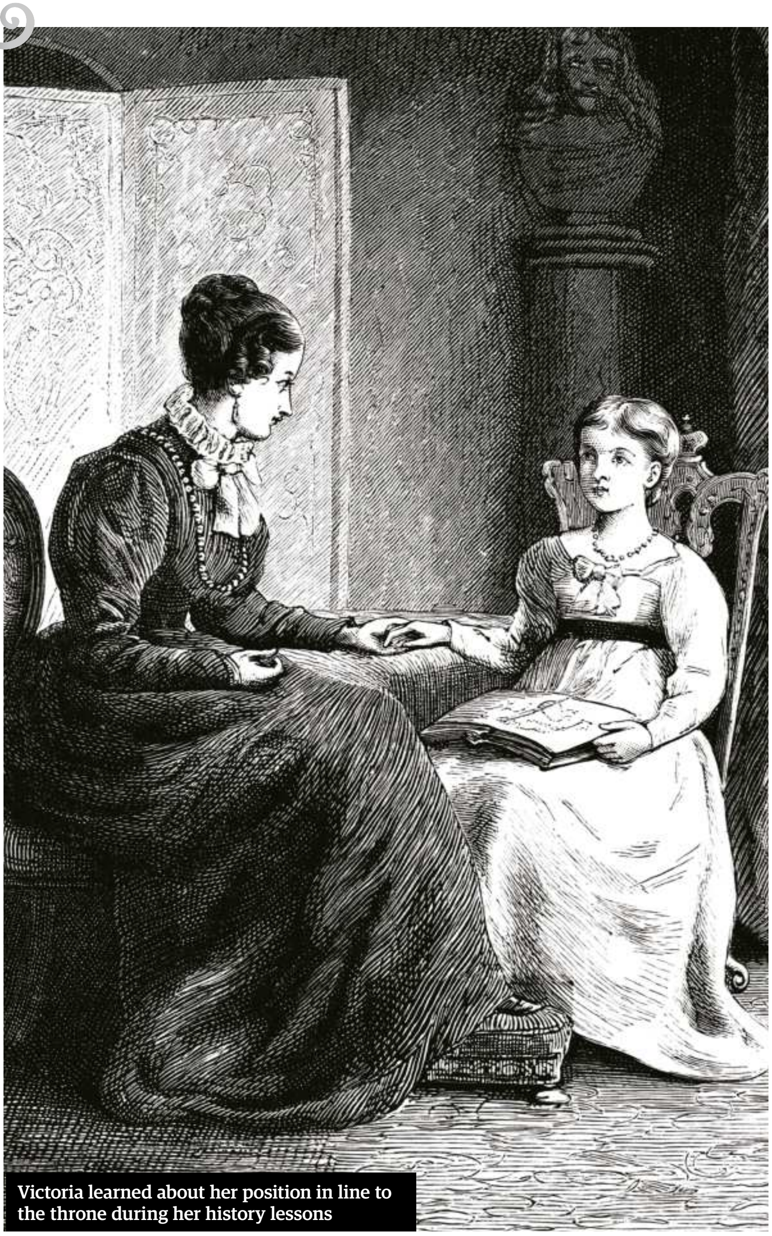
Words **Frances White**

When Victoria was born, the monarchy was in the midst of a mild succession crisis. George III had plenty of children - 15 to be exact - but the untimely death of his heir, George IV's only child, the beloved Princess Charlotte, had left the future of the monarchy in some disarray. There were three older sons in line before Victoria's father, Edward, Duke of Kent, but all bar one were aging rapidly and had no legitimate surviving heirs. Upon her birth, Victoria became fifth in line for the throne, and the first in line of the next generation.

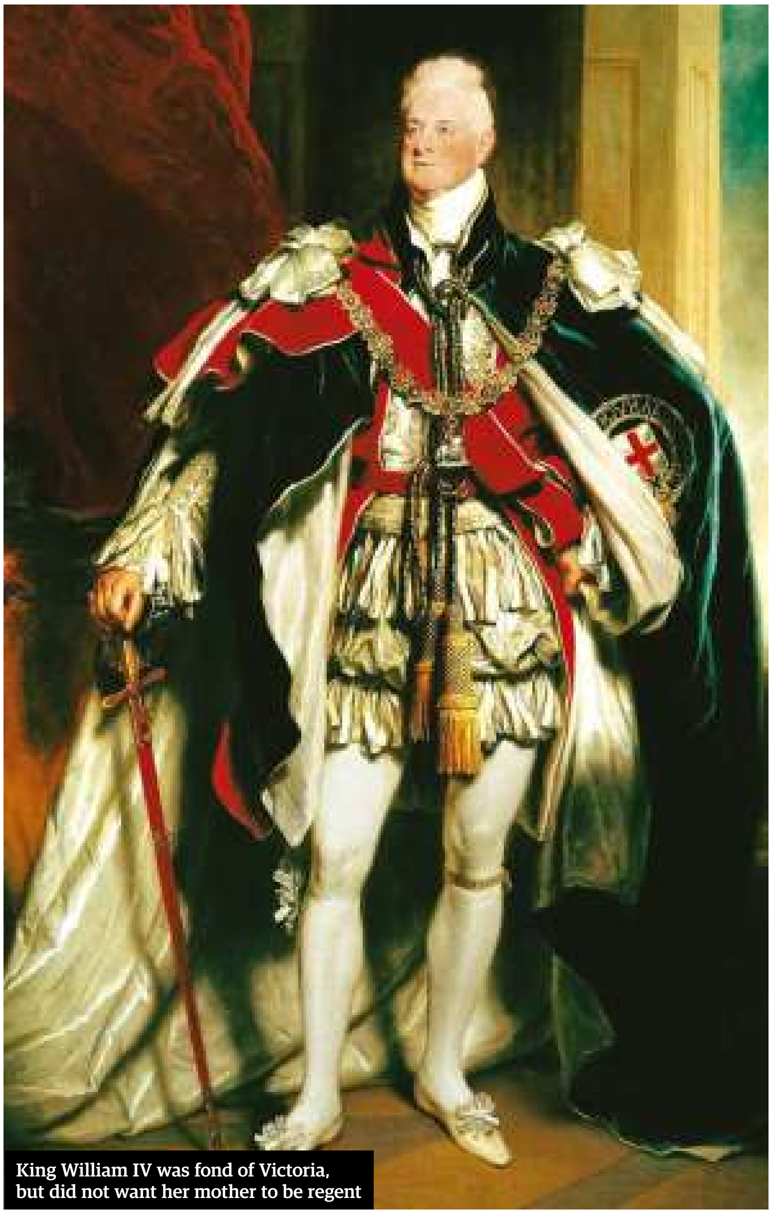
The prince regent loathed his brother Edward so much that he found the thought of a child of his inheriting the throne utterly detestable. Although he agreed on the surface, standing in as godfather at her christening, he used his power to forbid any pomp or ceremony. He also made a blacklist of 'unacceptable' names for the newborn - all of which happened to be used by the royal family. When the archbishop enquired what name she could be given, the regent reportedly retorted, "Alexandrina." This instance at the young child's christening, and her very name itself, began a tradition that Victoria would have to endure for many years: being pushed and led by men who wished to control her life. The prince wanted this child to garner no attention, he wanted her tucked away in a manor house until she could marry a foreign prince. And for a while he would have his way. Victoria's father adored her, and to the chagrin of his brother he was quick to show her off at any fitting occasion. Unfortunately, Edward died just eight months after her birth, leaving her with her mother, the duchess of Kent, and excessive debt. With Victoria then only third in line to the throne, the displaced mother and daughter were offered a suite of rooms in the dilapidated Kensington Palace to live in. The duchess had a choice: return to her native Coburg with assured income from her first marriage, or take a chance on Victoria's possible ascension. However uncertain it may have been, she chose the latter. From the beginning, the duchess believed her child was fated for greatness. She was still young, beautiful and full of life, but she put all that aside and settled for a life of quiet retirement and devotion to her daughter.

Reflecting on the moment she discovered she would become queen, Victoria wrote "I cried much on learning it"

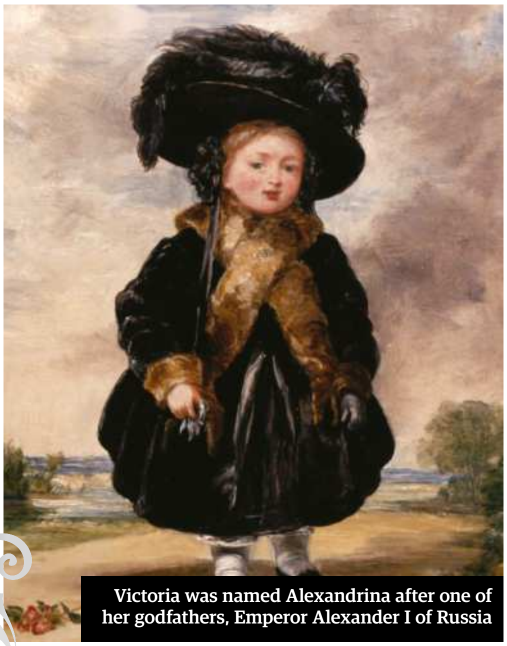
The duchess was encouraged in no small part by her constant companion, John Conroy. He had served as Victoria's father's equerry, and after Edward's death became a close confidant and adviser to her mother. Conroy was a soldier who



Victoria learned about her position in line to the throne during her history lessons



King William IV was fond of Victoria, but did not want her mother to be regent



Victoria was named Alexandrina after one of her godfathers, Emperor Alexander I of Russia

had attracted disdain through his skill of expertly dodging any actual battles. Although Conroy had been set up with a marriage designed to raise his position in society, he judged this inadequate and instead viewed Edward and his family as his ticket to power.

Victoria's father was likely wary of him, as he refused, despite much begging, to name Conroy his daughter's legal guardian upon his death. Although he was unsuccessful in obtaining guardianship of the young royal, his power over her mother meant that he was able to exert his will upon Victoria. Together they created an immensely strict set of rules known as the Kensington System, which Victoria was expected to obey. Conroy was aware of the duchess's unpopular reputation, and worked hard to paint her as a doting, caring mother while whispering warnings in her ear about members of the royal family, fuelling her paranoia.

Though she was a bright, affable girl, Victoria's childhood was constrained and melancholy. Secretly Conroy would bully the young girl, insulting and mocking her at any opportunity, and his power over her mother prevented her from socialising with other children. The duchess likely didn't mean any ill will towards her daughter, but at a very young age she had lost the man she adored. As a lonely, fragile soul, she quickly fell for the whims of an ambitious man who wanted to use her for his own ends, and it seems she was reluctant to believe the truth. Either way, the situation meant that every aspect of Victoria's life was controlled and, though in line to the throne, all power was taken from her.

The young Victoria had accepted her fate, but as she matured, her will began to harden. She was lively, effervescent, and grew acutely aware of her position in society and the duty that may one day fall upon her. When Victoria was 13, Conroy arranged for her to take a tour of the Midlands in order to show her off to the public. King William IV, Victoria's uncle, disliked the trips, stating they portrayed the young girl as his rival rather than his heir, and Victoria shared his opinion.

She complained that the constant appearances were exhausting and she quickly fell ill. Conroy dismissed this illness, but when Victoria contracted a fever, he was quick to try to take advantage of her weakened state by pressing his candidacy as her personal secretary. However, Victoria, after years of control by a cruel man, told him no. From this day on the princess grew more stubborn, though she did not portray it outwardly, and remained the vision of a perfect Georgian lady. In private, she poured her frustrations into journals and waited for the day she could finally take control of her own life. Although the duchess had fallen for them, Conroy's schemes didn't fool everyone. At what would be his final birthday banquet in 1836, William IV proclaimed to all – Victoria and her mother included – that he would live at least nine months longer in order to see his beloved niece on the throne, preventing her mother acting as regent and describing her as "surrounded by evil advisers". Victoria was so shocked she burst into tears. Nine months later, as promised, he was dead. Victoria had turned 18 just weeks before. Unfortunately for Conroy, the old man's sheer will had won out.

On the very morning of William's death, Victoria, wearing only a dressing gown, was informed she was queen. Her first request as monarch was for something that she had never before experienced – an hour alone. At 9am that day, she received Lord Melbourne, the prime minster, "quite alone" in her room, where he kissed her hand repeatedly and spoke with her at length. Later that day at 9pm, she saw him again She later wrote, "I had a very important and a very comfortable conversation with him." Conroy had spent 18 years trying to control Victoria with manipulation and savagery; Melbourne, however, had won her heart with kind words and charm in under an hour.

Conroy had placed his bets on a malleable figure, but in Victoria he had looked in the wrong place. Upon moving to Buckingham Palace, Victoria did everything in her power to keep Conroy and her mother at a distance, denying the ambitious servant the power and place in her court he so desired. When her mother objected, Victoria responded, "I thought you would not expect me to invite Sir John Conroy after his conduct towards me for some years past." It's easy to see why Conroy may have thought her a soft touch – she was a tiny, plain girl, somewhat shy and wholly inexperienced – but beneath her mild exterior she harboured a will of fire. For the first time, Victoria made it clear that she was not going to be pushed any longer and Conroy was expelled from the queen's household.

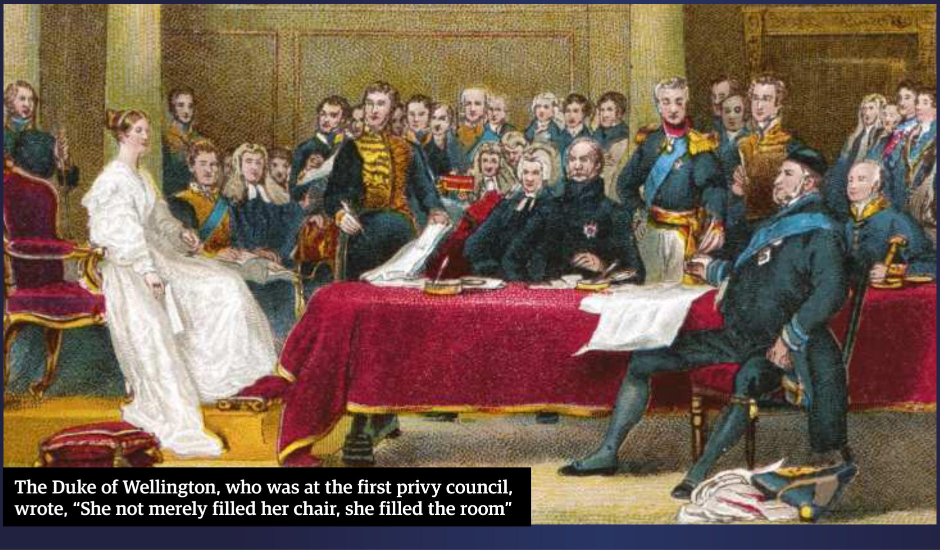
Victoria was the first monarch to live in Buckingham Palace and, far from the splendour we associate with the building today, it was in a terrible state of disrepair. The lavatories were not well ventilated and hundreds of the windows were impossible to open. Just a teenager, Victoria was alone in a new place without the two people – however much she despised them – who had been the strongest influences on her life thus far. To top it off, she was faced with the most monumental role any individual could play. It is likely that this fear encouraged Victoria to attach herself so fiercely to her most beloved companion, Lord Melbourne.

REPUBLICAN STIRRINGS IN BRITAIN

When Victoria ascended the throne, it wasn't just her inexperience that served as a barrier to success, but also her own people. Opinion of the monarchy was at an all-time low thanks to her predecessors and unpopular uncles.

This dislike of the royals had been a gradual decline going back to George III, who became the scapegoat for the loss of America. His recurring and debilitating mental illnesses did little to restore faith in the Crown, while his son, George IV, made matters worse. Not only were his extra-marital affairs common knowledge, but he was seen to be wasting tax payers' money on his own frivolities. George lived a life of heavy drinking and indulgence at a time when his countrymen were fighting the Napoleonic Wars. Far from a national hero, he became a figure of contempt and loathing, with constant public mockery of his obese appearance. One of the king's aides privately penned, "A more contemptible, cowardly, selfish, unfeeling dog does not exist… There have been good and wise kings but not many of them… and this I believe to be one of the worst." William IV, Victoria's predecessor, was initially more popular. His coronation was a simple affair – a far cry from his brother's extravagance. However, his reign became dominated by the Reform crisis.

When Victoria was crowned it was to a public who regarded the monarchy as one of "general moral squalor." It is no stretch to say that she faced increasing Republican opinions, and her battle to regain the trust of her subjects would be a long one.



The Duke of Wellington, who was at the first privy council, wrote, "She not merely filled her chair, she filled the room"

She wasn't used to kindness, especially not from men, and Melbourne was not only considerate but he flattered her. He assured her that all her insecurities – her size, inexperience and shyness – were advantages. He treated the young woman with a tenderness she had seldom felt, spending hours every night writing to her, and for this she admired and loved him greatly. When Victoria held her first privy council, hours after being told she was now queen, she was an 18-year-old surrounded by the most influential and experienced men in British politics. Even if she did later proclaim herself "not at all nervous", she must have felt comfort in the assurance that, from now on, she could steady herself on Melbourne's arm.

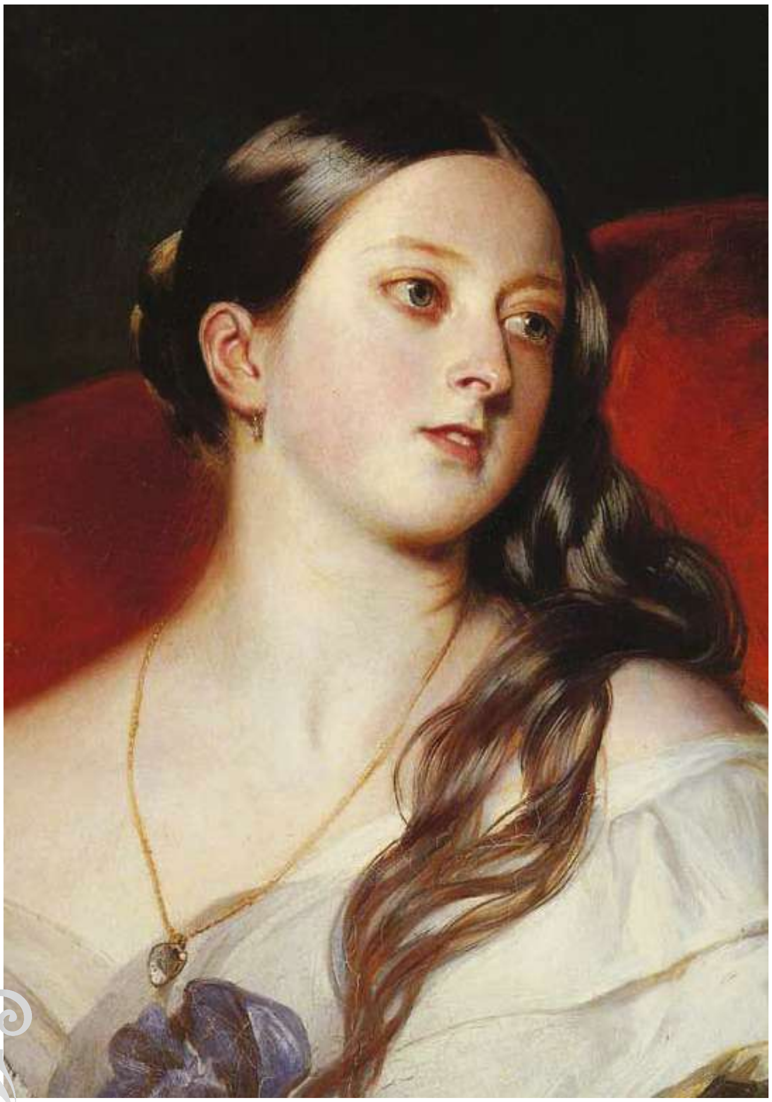
The two quickly grew inseparable. Melbourne, 40 years her senior, was a childless widower, and it

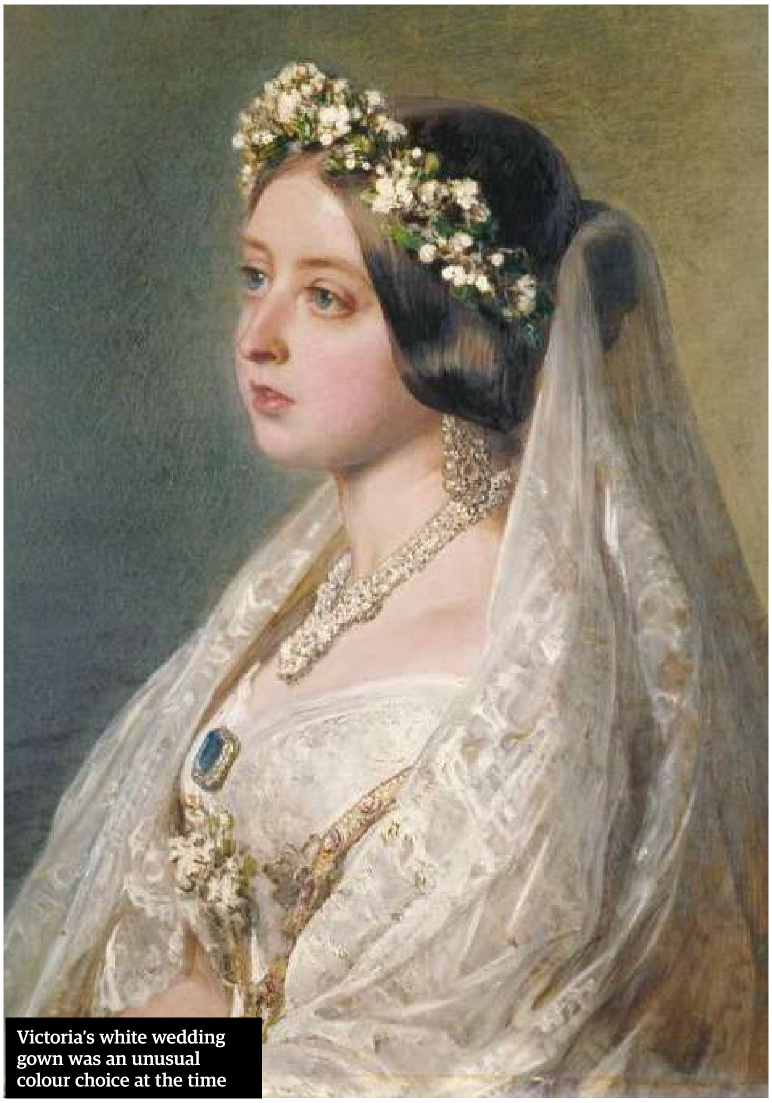
is likely he saw Victoria as a kind of surrogate daughter. As the diarist Charles Greville wrote, he was "...passionately fond of her." What this relationship meant to Victoria, however, is up for debate. There is no doubt she lacked a father figure in her life, and she herself proclaimed to have loved him "like a father," but it's possible the young woman's feelings were more complex. She was new to the realm of romance and, as demonstrated in her later life, easily wooed by charismatic men. Greville too suggested that the young queen's feelings may have been romantic, "...though she did not know it." Victoria was, after all, incredibly professional and dictated to by her duties. Even if she did feel some attraction to her witty, adoring minister, it is unlikely she would have acted upon it. A year after she ascended the throne, Victoria was officially crowned at Westminster Abbey, attracting unprecedented crowds. For the people watching, there was much at stake – the monarchy had fallen out of favour thanks to the excessive extravagance and general unpopularity of her uncles. In a way, a youthful woman with silent professionalism was a breath of fresh air. At one point in the ceremony, the 82-year-old Lord Rolle fell down the steps and Victoria immediately advanced towards him to prevent him hurting himself further. This simple act of kindness caused a sensation among the public, who had never witnessed such naiveté and good-naturedness in their monarch before. Victoria wasn't excessive, she was a tiny, dignified lady with a strong presence and the public instantly adored her. Melbourne adored her too; he stood by her side for the entire ceremony. Public opinion of Victoria was high, but opinion, as many of her predecessors realised, could change as quickly as the wind. Victoria was absolutely ruled by emotion and she was fiercely loyal to Melbourne – these traits would see public opinion plummet.

> "The monarchy had fallen out of favour with the people, but Victoria's silent professionalism was a breath of fresh air"

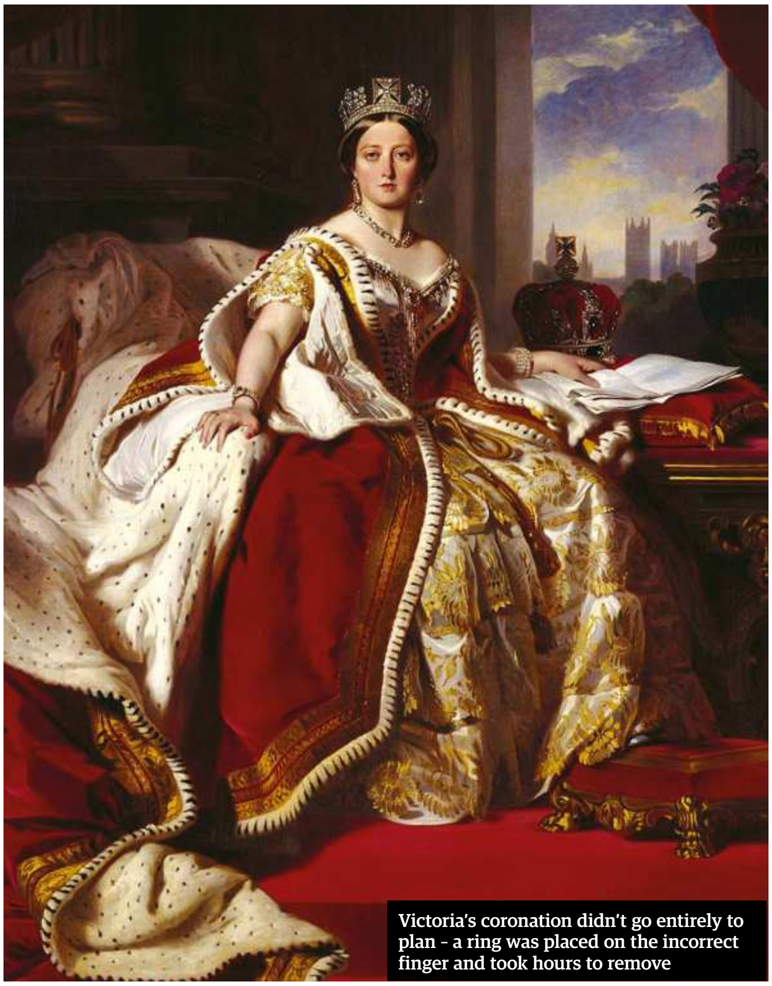
In 1839, one of Victoria's mother's ladies in waiting, Lady Flora, experienced swelling in her lower abdomen and soon enough the rumour spread that she was pregnant – a rumour that Melbourne did nothing to quell. Victoria, not overly fond with Flora to begin with, immediately suspected that the much-loathed Conroy was the father. When Flora finally agreed to an examination, it was revealed that she in fact had cancer of the liver. The entire affair was overblown by the public and the image of the naive, gentle Victoria was tarnished. At Flora's funeral, the queen's carriage was stoned, she was hissed at in public and when she appeared at Ascot there were cries of "Mrs Melbourne!"

Melbourne, though a valuable tutor to Victoria, seemed more eager to flatter than give her hard truths. Their close relationship suffered a blow in May 1839 when Melbourne was forced to resign after a bill was narrowly passed in the House of Commons. Victoria was distraught, and it was with great reluctance that she asked the Tory leader, Robert Peel, to form a government. Peel agreed to do so on the condition that she dismiss many

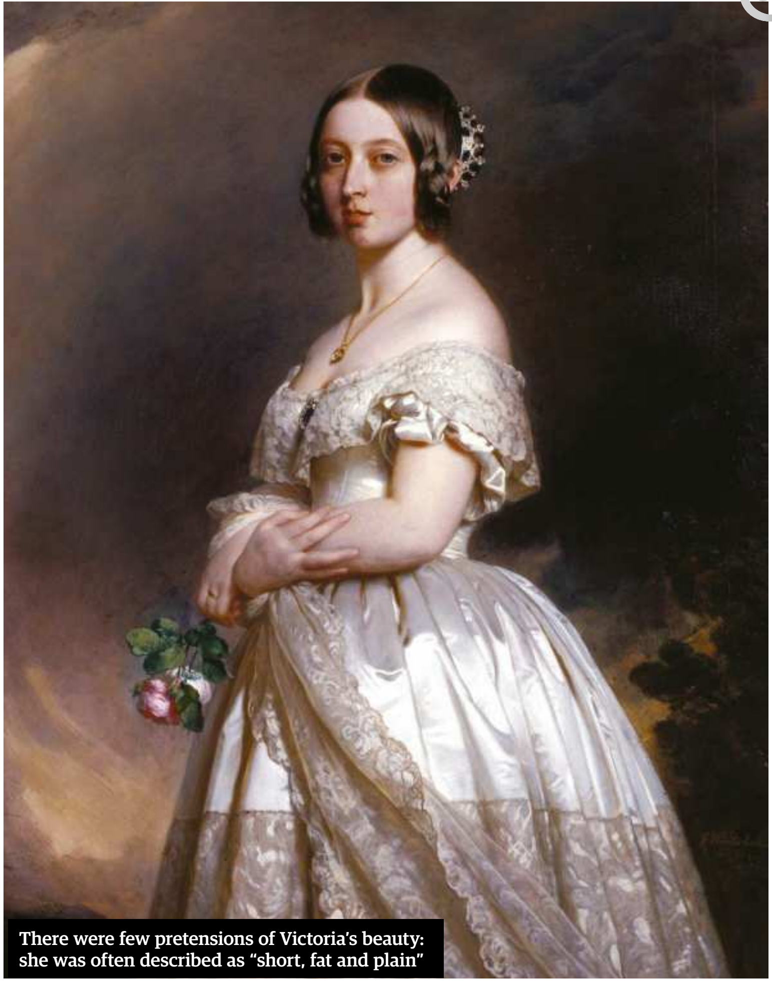




Victoria's white wedding gown was an unusual colour choice at the time



Victoria's coronation didn't go entirely to plan – a ring was placed on the incorrect finger and took hours to remove



There were few pretensions of Victoria's beauty: she was often described as "short, fat and plain"

of her Whig-leaning ladies in waiting, and replace them with Tories. Victoria, already despairing over losing her dear Melbourne, refused to give up her remaining close companions. This meant that Peel in turn refused to become prime minister and Melbourne, through much persuasion, remained in the position. After just two years on the throne Victoria let her passions guide her, and it proved to be a grave political blunder, doing little to help her public image as Melbourne's pawn. The sweet, caring girl was, in the public's eye, transforming into a stubborn, cruel matriarch.

> The day she became queen, Victoria wrote in her journal: "I shall do my utmost to fulfil my duty towards my country"

What Victoria needed was security. It wasn't that she was a weak person, far from it, but she had endured so many years of solitude that to have a friendly person to guide her was akin to a knight in shining armour. Melbourne had fit the bill at first, but he was aging, and – as the Bedchamber Crisis proved – he could be out of her life with a single vote. Victoria needed a more concrete relationship, or else she risked losing not only her kingdom, but herself. Victoria needed a husband.

The match between Victoria and Albert had been crafted years ago, she had met him aged 17, and had been immediately drawn to him. However, she was somewhat resistant towards rushing into marriage after only just obtaining her independence. In late 1839, Albert visited her again and she fell for him completely. Not only was he dashing and charming, but he was educated – an essential trait for her future husband – and perhaps even more importantly for the hot-tempered young queen, he was patient. Within five days, Victoria, ever led by her heart, had proposed to him.

Many of her journal entries paint the courtship as akin to a fairy tale, with the dashing prince sweeping her off her feet. Although that's likely, it was also a fiery and passionate relationship. Victoria was renowned for having a short fuse, and Albert often found himself on the receiving end of it. Unlike Melbourne, who often took the easy route in saying what the queen wanted to hear, Albert was honest. He pushed the issues that meant the most to him, notably regarding the poor, no matter how uncomfortable it made Victoria feel. In this way, Albert and Melbourne were both advisers and tutors, but Albert was something the prime minister was not: Victoria's moral guidance.

As Victoria grew closer to Albert, she in turn became less reliant on Melbourne. In her youth he had been her support system and shoulder to lean on, but the maturing queen was quickly learning there were others she could turn to. We know Victoria's side of the story, she recorded it in the pages of her many journals, but Melbourne's true feelings are lost to history. We can only imagine how he felt as his companion and co-conspirator drifted away from him. Whether it was with sadness or pride, Melbourne stood and watched as Victoria married another.

Victoria's wedding was the first of a British queen for 300 years, and she broke tradition by wearing a heavy satin dress entirely in white. At her chest she wore a sapphire brooch given to her by her fiancé. Echoing the day she was crowned, the crowds were so large they engulfed London. Once more the people were jubilant; they cried her name not in hatred but in admiration. Albert had already begun to do great things for Victoria's popularity, and through sheer will and determination he would overcome the odds and obtain the public's love himself.

For Victoria the day was "the happiest day of my life!" Indeed, with Albert at her side, it finally felt as if the years of political mistakes and scandal were finally in the past. For now Victoria could look fondly to the future, but little did the queen know, the biggest tests of her life were yet to come, many of which she would have to face utterly alone.

Queen Victoria's childhood was lonely and highly regimented

THE YOUNG PRINCESS

She might have been raised in a palace, but for Alexandrina Victoria, life was anything but a fairy tale

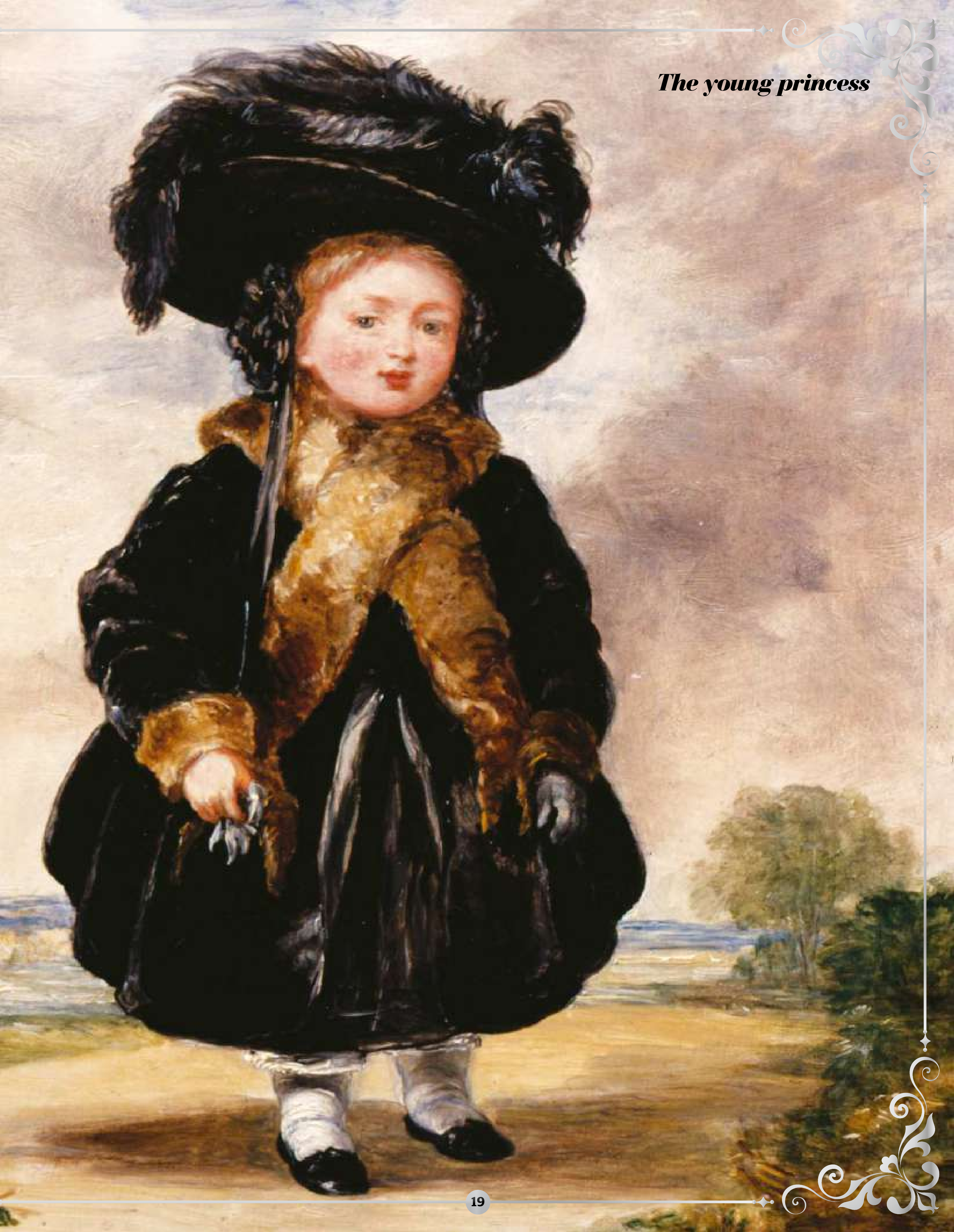
Words **Catherine Curzon**

When Edward and Victoria, the Duke and Duchess of Kent, left their home in Bavaria and headed to England in the spring of 1819, they had very good reasons for doing so. The duchess was heavily pregnant with what would be the couple's only child and they were determined that the baby would be born in England, making her unquestionably English in the eyes of the law. The couple arrived in late April and just a month later, on 24 May 1819, Princess Alexandrina Victoria was born in Kensington Palace.

The Kents were heavily in debt and their return to London was masterminded and arranged by British army officer John Conroy, an equerry to the duke who was known for his ruthless efficiency. He would play a significant role in the life of the young Victoria. At first the little family didn't remain in London but instead moved to Sidmouth in Devon, where the cost of living was much lower. Yet when the popular and well-loved duke died of pneumonia in January 1820, the duchess returned to Kensington Palace with her infant daughter and prepared to take up a quiet life away from the public eye.

Although at the time of her birth Victoria was fifth in line for the throne after three uncles and her own father, that line dwindled at a rapid rate. By the time her uncle William came to the throne in 1830, Victoria was no longer an outside contender, she was in pole position.

Regardless of what excitement the future may hold, the young Victoria's childhood was dull. She might be a princess who lived in a palace but there was certainly nothing glamorous about her life. She wasn't raised in opulence, but in a manner that would be familiar to many upper-class English girls during the mid-19th century, though she was certainly one of the most isolated. Victoria's time was taken up with a strictly timetabled educational programme that was intended to improve her, and there was no room for slacking off. Known as the Kensington System, Victoria was in lessons every day from 9.30 until 11.30 each morning and then again from 3.00 until 5.00 each afternoon. After a block of lessons her mother would hold an audience with Victoria and grill her on what



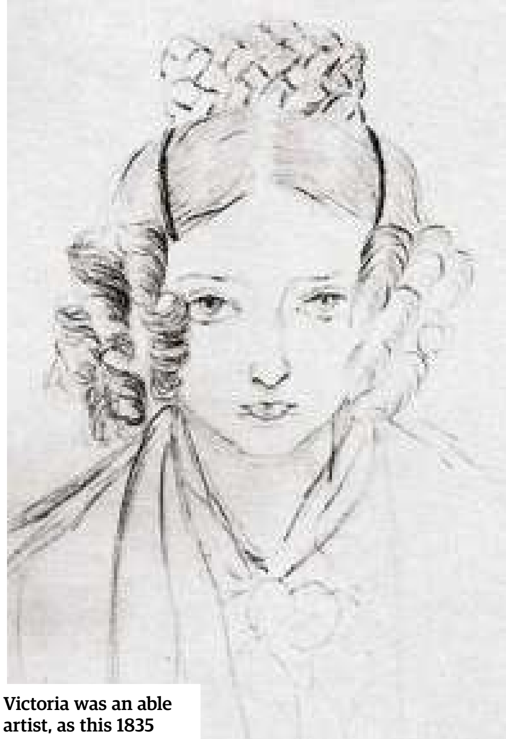
she had learned, in order to ensure that her education was sinking in. She was never alone, watched by her mother, Conroy or her tutors at all hours of the day, and she even shared a bedroom with the duchess.

Victoria took lessons in the arts, humanities, religion, and languages such as Greek, Latin, German, French and Italian. Despite her royal status she didn't enjoy a glittering lifestyle but instead was subjected to an exceptionally unremarkable diet, with regular bedtimes and plenty of time to enjoy the fresh air both walking and on horseback, which was a passion for the princess. The household's predominant language was German, though Victoria was fluent in English, but to all intents and purposes, she grew up speaking the language of her mother's homeland. She was a good-natured little girl, romantic and thoughtful and highly intelligent.

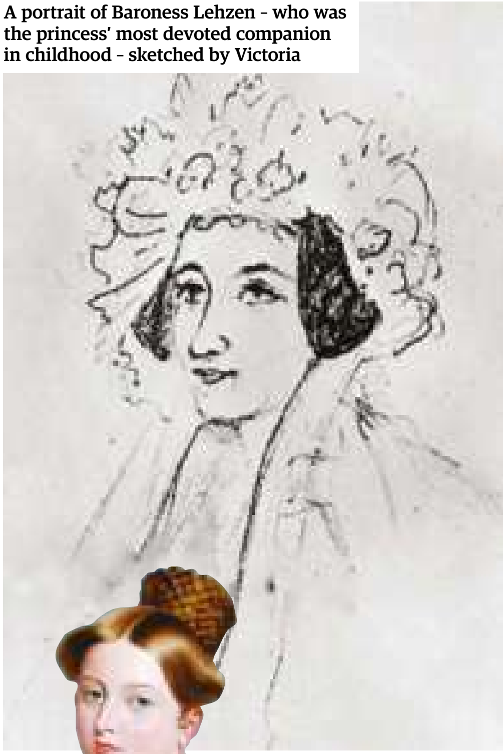
Victoria's education was overseen by her governess, Louise Lehzen, who was to become one of her closest confidantes. Baroness Lehzen monitored the activities of her charge through her so-called 'Behaviour Books', in which the young princess was required to reflect on her own conduct and attitude. Each day she recorded her self-assessment in the book and though her conduct was often exemplary, that certainly wasn't always the case. The self-reflection of the Behaviour Books, in which it was recorded that the adolescent Victoria occasionally behaved very badly indeed, was complemented by her own journals. She kept these from the age of 13 and recorded not only her comings and goings but also the private thoughts that might not be appropriate for the ominous-sounding Behaviour Books.

Victoria loved to write, not only her journal but works of fiction too. She also expressed herself through art and was a talented watercolourist and illustrator. Through her journals one can find her sketches and paintings of people she met and sights she saw, a habit she continued into adulthood. As an enthusiastic theatregoer, Victoria also chronicled the shows she had seen in her journals, in illustrations as well as written entries. As part of the Kensington System of education, which the duchess and Conroy had put into action,

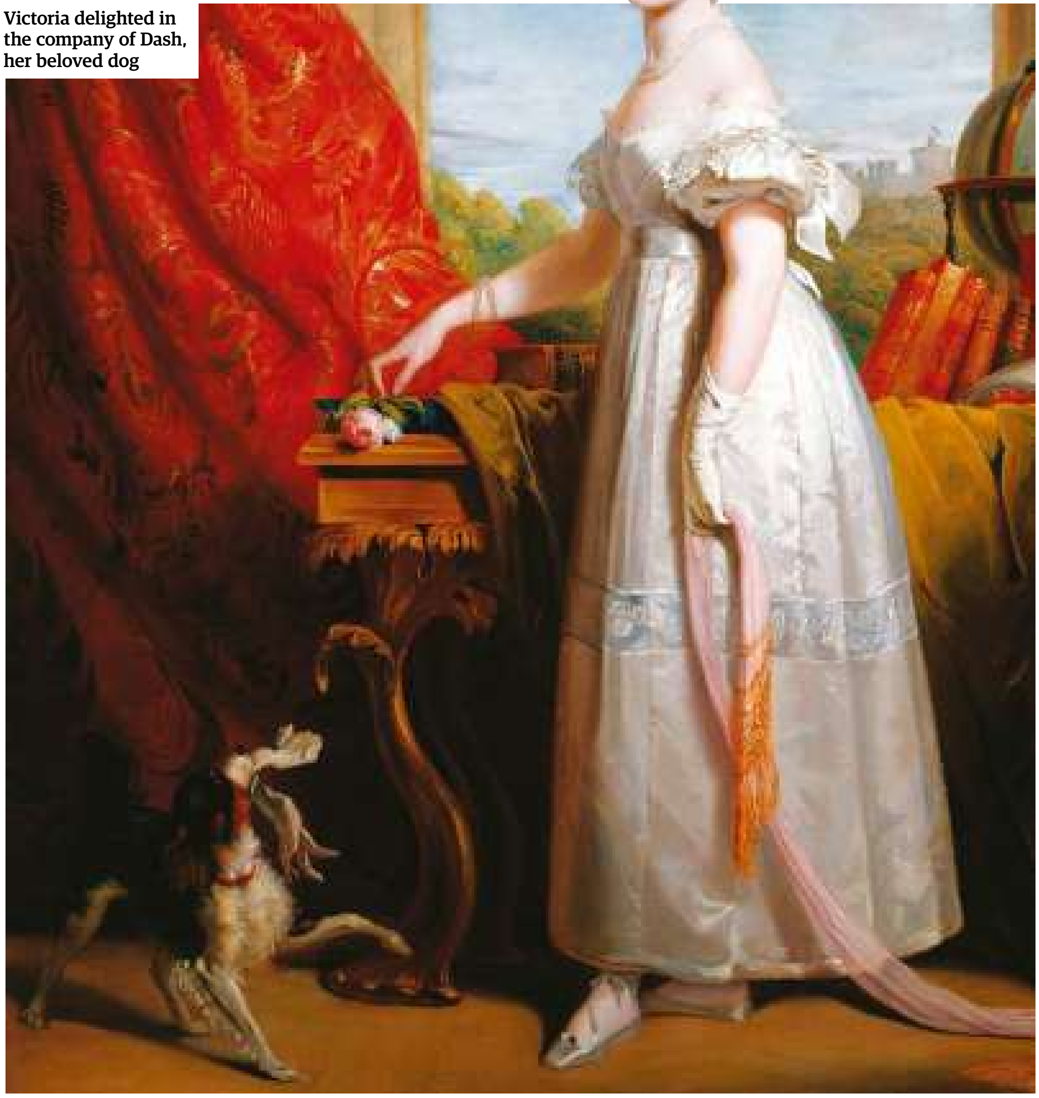
"She was never alone, watched by her mother, Conroy or her tutors at all hours of the day... she even shared a bedroom with the duchess"



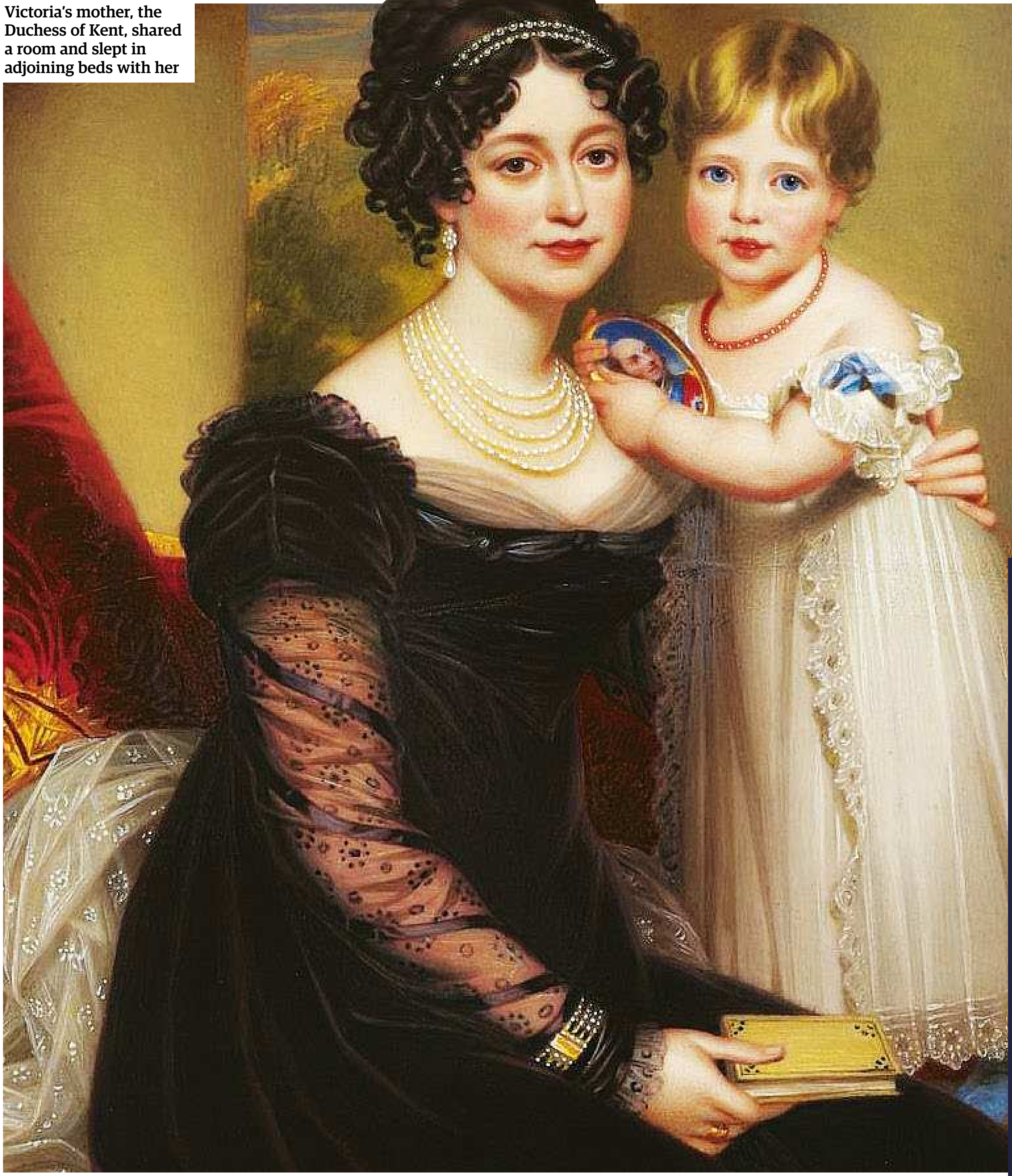
Victoria was an able artist, as this 1835 self-portrait shows



A portrait of Baroness Lehzen – who was the princess' most devoted companion in childhood – sketched by Victoria



Victoria delighted in the company of Dash, her beloved dog



Victoria's mother, the Duchess of Kent, shared a room and slept in adjoining beds with her

Victoria lived a very secluded life, prevented from socialising or making friends of her own age. The system was designed to ensure that Victoria was kept from anyone whom her mother and Conroy deemed unsuitable – which was virtually everybody – and kept the young princess in isolation. By doing this, they were able to keep her entirely under their influence and ensure that no scandal could possibly attach itself to her name.

Though Victoria delighted in the company of her little dog, Dash, she had precious few other friends. Her only playmates were her older half-sister by the Duchess of Kent's first marriage, Princess Feodora of Leiningen, and Conroy's daughter, Victoire. By now the comptroller to the Duchess of Kent, Conroy's influence over her and Victoria was virtually unchallenged and as the young princess moved up the line of succession, it continued to become ever more dominant.

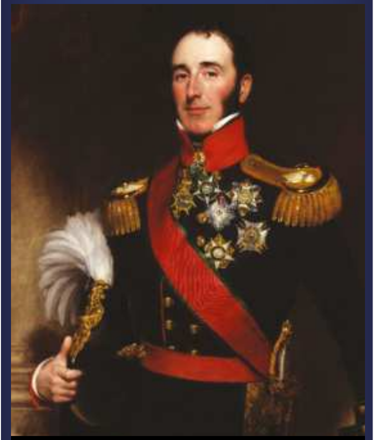
By 1830 George IV's health was in terminal decline. Neither he nor Clarence had any living heirs and Victoria finally learned just how close she was to the throne of Great Britain. While studying her genealogy with Baroness Lehzen, she asked who would succeed to the throne should all her aging uncles die without issue. After several attempts to dodge the question it was left for the Duchess of Kent to answer and tell Victoria that, in such circumstances, the crown would be hers. In her journal Victoria wrote of her despair when she realised what her future held and just what would be expected of her, recognising that her entire life would soon change forever. As George IV's health grew more frail, Victoria's stringent educational

THE KENSINGTON SYSTEM

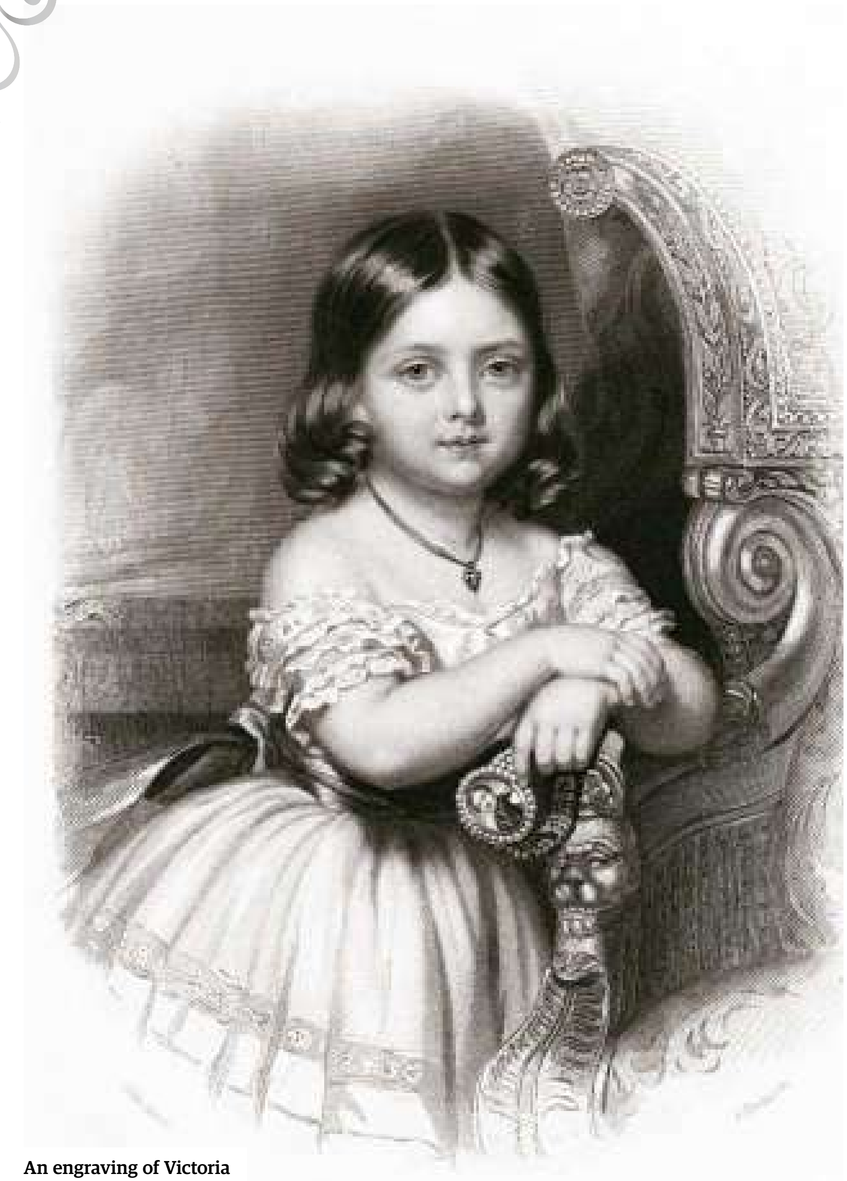
The Kensington System was intended to keep Princess Victoria entirely dependent on her mother, the Duchess of Kent, and the duchess' comptroller (and rumoured lover) John Conroy. The young princess was constantly monitored by them or her governess, Baroness Louise Lehzen.

From the age of five Victoria was subjected to a strict daily timetable, in which she had four hours of lessons each day. In addition to reading and writing, she studied scripture, Greek, Latin, French, German, and Italian, in addition to art, geography, history and etiquette. She was permitted to walk and ride in the palace grounds but was allowed only two friends, her half-sister and Conroy's daughter.

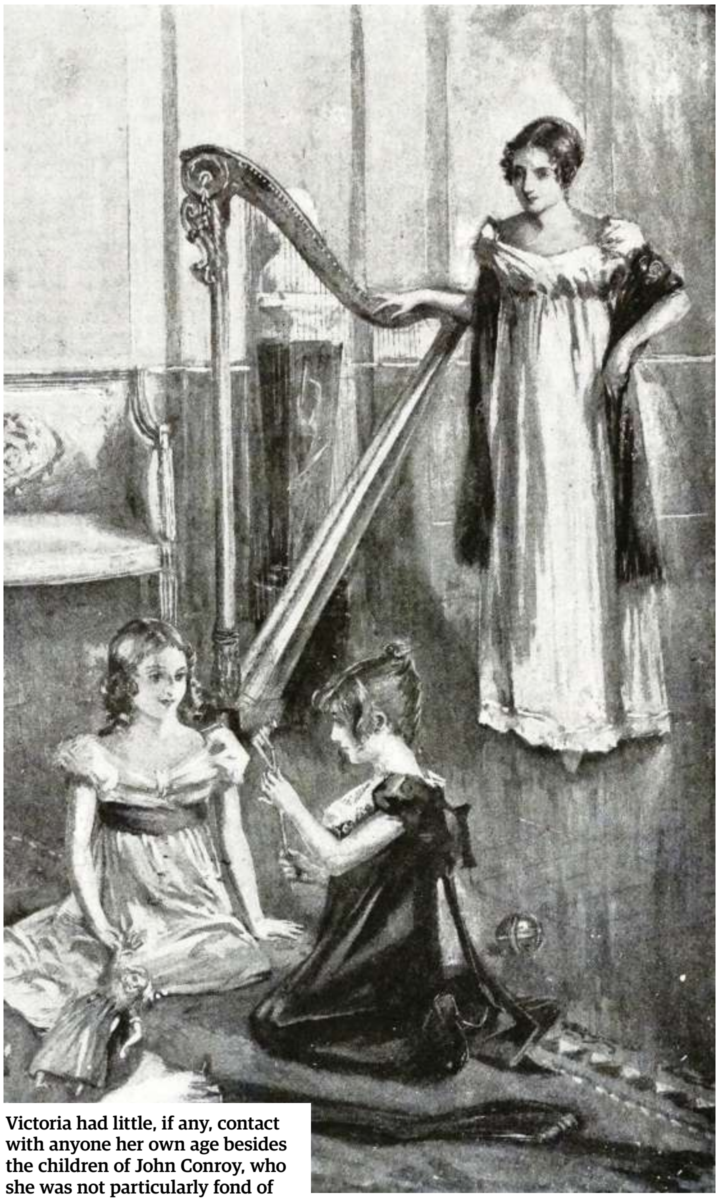
Victoria was never allowed to spend any time alone and as soon as she became queen, she had her bed removed from her mother's room and reserved an hour alone each day. Conroy, meanwhile, was barred from her presence as she finally took control of her own fate.



The ambitious John Conroy kept a watchful eye on Victoria's education



An engraving of Victoria as a young child



Victoria had little, if any, contact with anyone her own age besides the children of John Conroy, who she was not particularly fond of

timetable was overhauled in preparation for her eventual succession. In order to demonstrate that she and Conroy had raised a child fit to be queen, the duchess put her daughter forward for a series of examinations. She excelled in all of them.

Yet though she had been kept in seclusion, Victoria's natural curiosity couldn't be assuaged. She wrote often to her Uncle Leopold, King of the Belgians, and he proved to be an invaluable figure in advising her of the life of a monarch. He also took an interest in her health and wellbeing, spurred on by his concerns at her very small stature. At home, however, Victoria had little in the way of advice and much in the way of instruction. Her mother smothered and micromanaged every aspect of her life in tandem with Conroy, and with precious little contact with friends of her own age, Victoria was growing more isolated than ever. She slept in her mother's room, was accompanied by her mother when changing, bathing or doing anything else, and was never left alone.

When George IV died and his brother, William, succeeded him in 1830, it was the catalyst for a family feud that would become synonymous with Victoria and her mother. Conroy took offence at the position Victoria was to be offered in the coronation procession of the incoming William IV and advised the Duchess of Kent that she should be forbidden from attending. Victoria's mother did as he bade and the princess was barred from her uncle's coronation. Of course, the king knew that his adolescent niece had no say in this decision but he reserved a particular loathing for the Duchess of Kent and John Conroy.

Victoria now became a pawn in the empire-building schemes of her mother and her comptroller, Conroy. The couple arranged a series of tours and visits for the princess in order to raise her public profile in preparation for her eventual succession, but the king was apoplectic when he heard of the plans.

Meanwhile, Conroy did all he could to whip up in-fighting at Kensington Palace, using his Whig connections to enrage and challenge the Tory monarch and his supporters. After her sheltered childhood, Victoria found her endless routine of tours and visits utterly exhausting and when she tried to appeal to her mother for time to rest, the duchess wouldn't hear of it. Victoria's health began to fail, but still she was forced out on the road.

As tensions at home grew, so too did they increase in Parliament where supporters of the Duchess of Kent were lobbying for her to be named as regent should King William die before Victoria came of age.

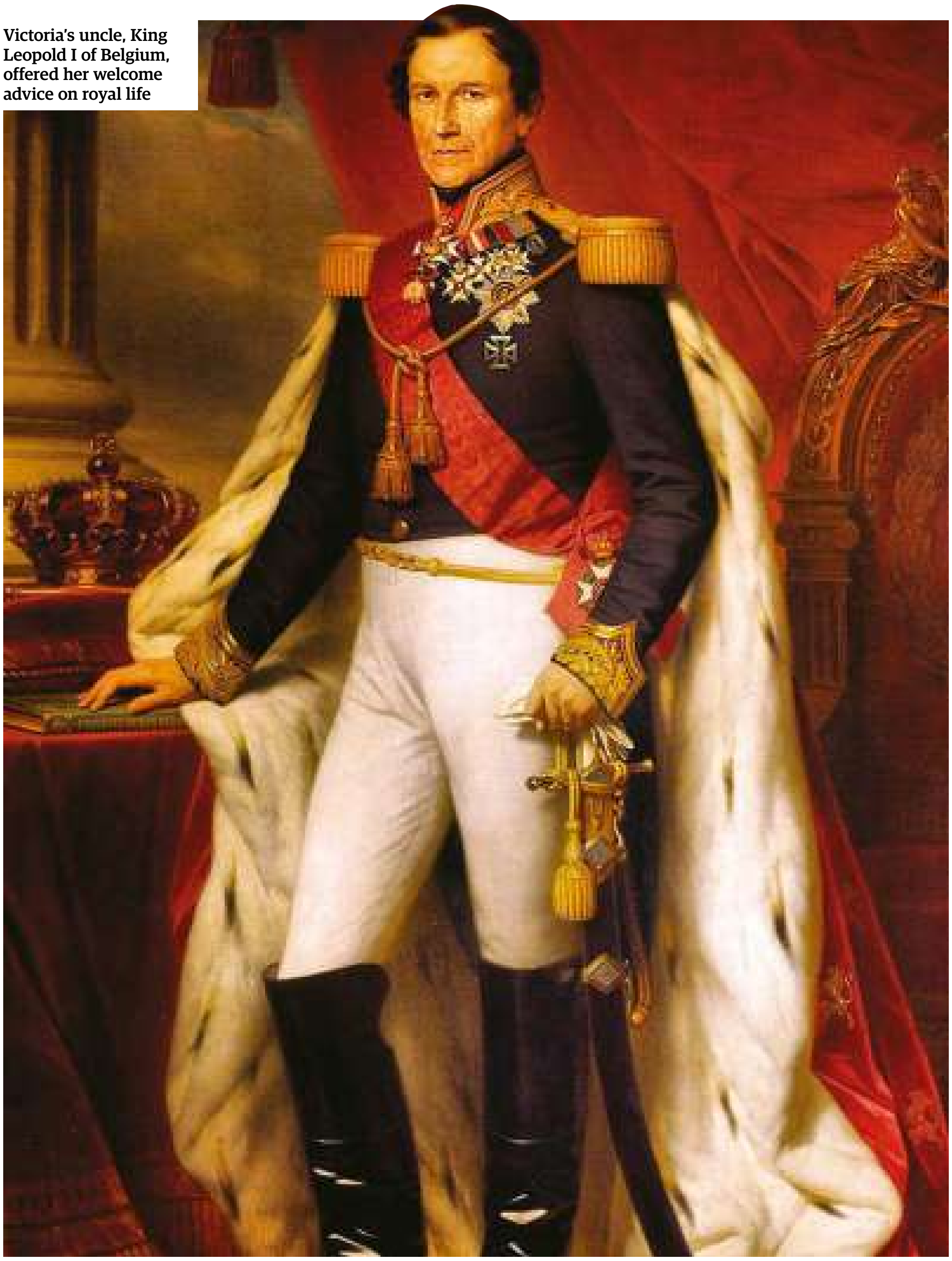
This was a thorny issue at the time, as Parliament was discussing a Regency Bill for just such an eventuality. With another uncle, Ernest, Duke of Cumberland, favourite for the role, the ambitious Conroy discredited him by spreading rumours that he was planning to harm Princess Victoria. The scheming twosome achieved their aim and the Duchess of Kent was named as prospective regent, but she wouldn't rule alone. Instead, she would be assisted by a council made up of other members of the royal family and senior government officials.

Furious, King William IV was determined to remain alive until Victoria came of age. Above all, he hoped to keep the duchess and Conroy from achieving any power. Yet as Victoria's teenage years passed, the princess who had been raised in seclusion and would now one day rule as queen was subject to their whims in other ways, never more so than when she was thrust into the royal marriage mart. Both Conroy and the Duchess of Kent intended to find an ideal match for the heir to the throne, and the only way to do that was to have her many attributes widely seen.

To this end, Victoria left isolation behind and joined the London social scene, under the watchful eye of her mother. She loved the excitement after so long alone but as Victoria's confidence grew, her relationship with the Duchess of Kent declined. Domineering and disinterested in private, the duchess liked to give the impression that she was an attentive and caring mother in public.

In 1835, that strained relationship reached breaking point. After a visit from her beloved uncle Leopold, Victoria fell seriously ill with a fever. As she laid on her sickbed, the duchess and Conroy pressured her to sign a document that would have given the comptroller the position of her private secretary, a role in which his influence and power would be virtually unchallenged. Victoria resisted, but she never forgot their behaviour.

Their ambitions frustrated, the duchess and Conroy never seized the power they hungered for and just two years later, Victoria became queen.



Victoria's uncle, King Leopold I of Belgium, offered her welcome advice on royal life

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A PRINCESS

Family breakfast
After waking in their shared room, Victoria and her mother enjoyed a simple breakfast of milk and fruit.

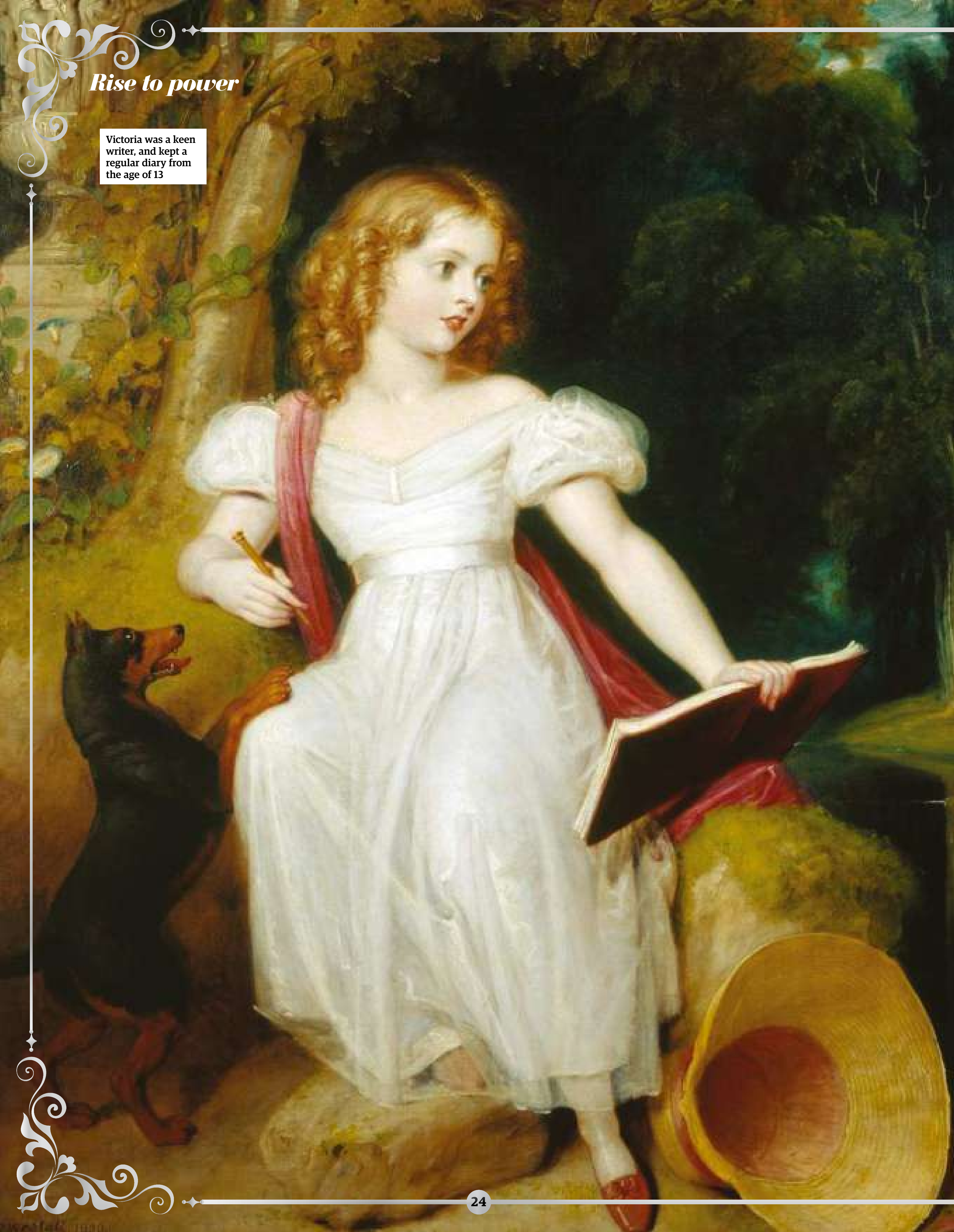
Lessons
For two hours each morning and afternoon, Victoria underwent strict lessons with Baroness Lehzen and hand-picked tutors.

Taking the air
Under the watchful eye of her mother, Victoria was allowed to walk or ride in the grounds of Kensington Palace.

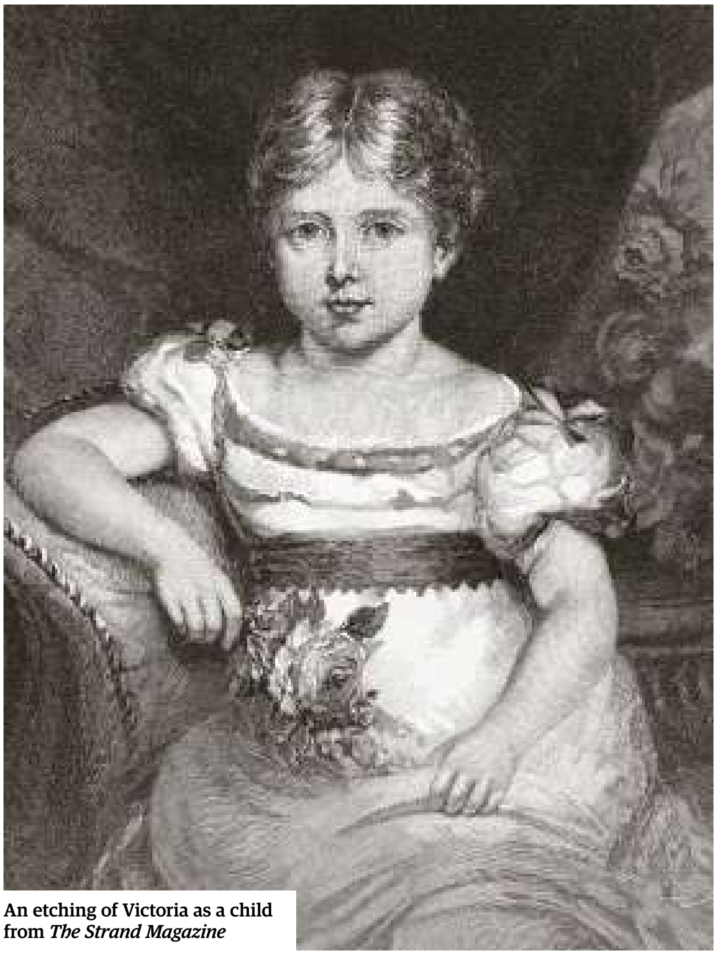
Behaviour Books
Each day, Victoria completed her Behaviour Books, in which she evaluated her own conduct for her mother and tutor.

The princess' diaries
From the age of 13, Victoria wrote in her personal journal, leaving a valuable record for the generations that followed.

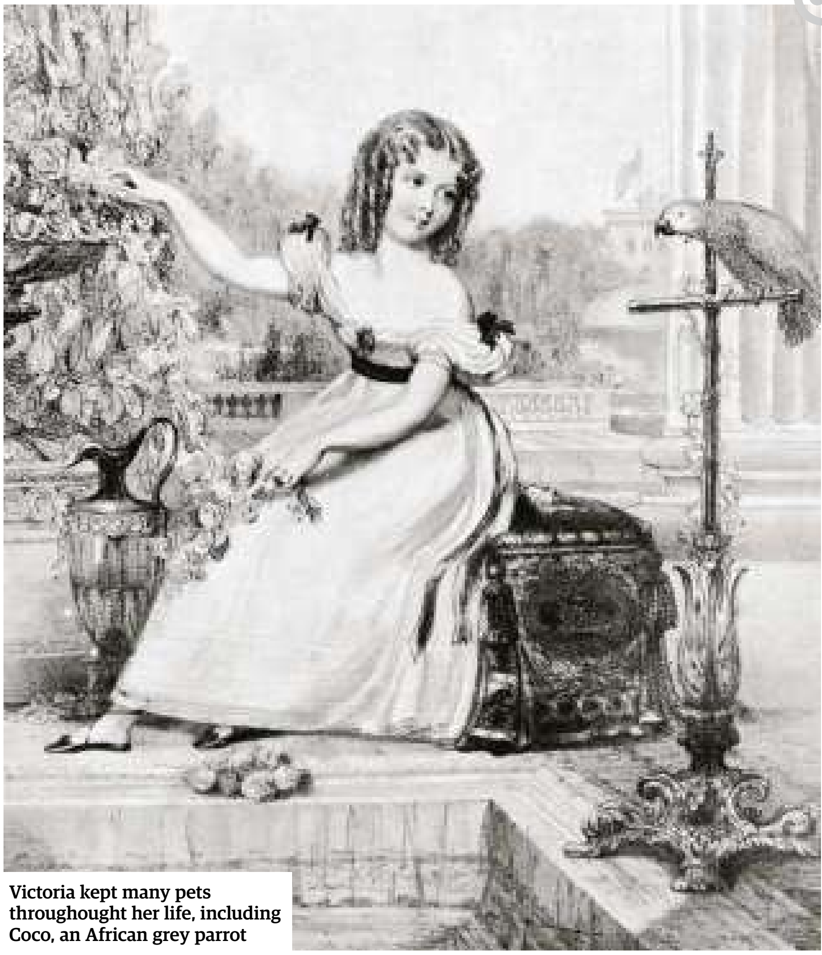
> "When George IV died and his brother, William, succeeded him in 1830, it was the catalyst for a family feud that would become synonymous with Victoria and her mother"



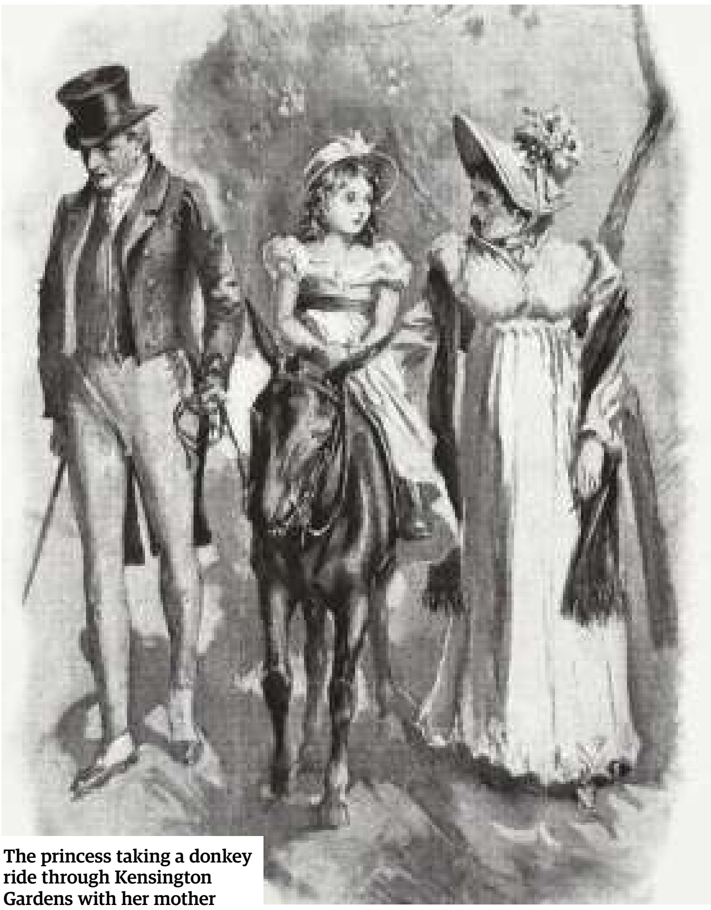
Victoria was a keen writer, and kept a regular diary from the age of 13



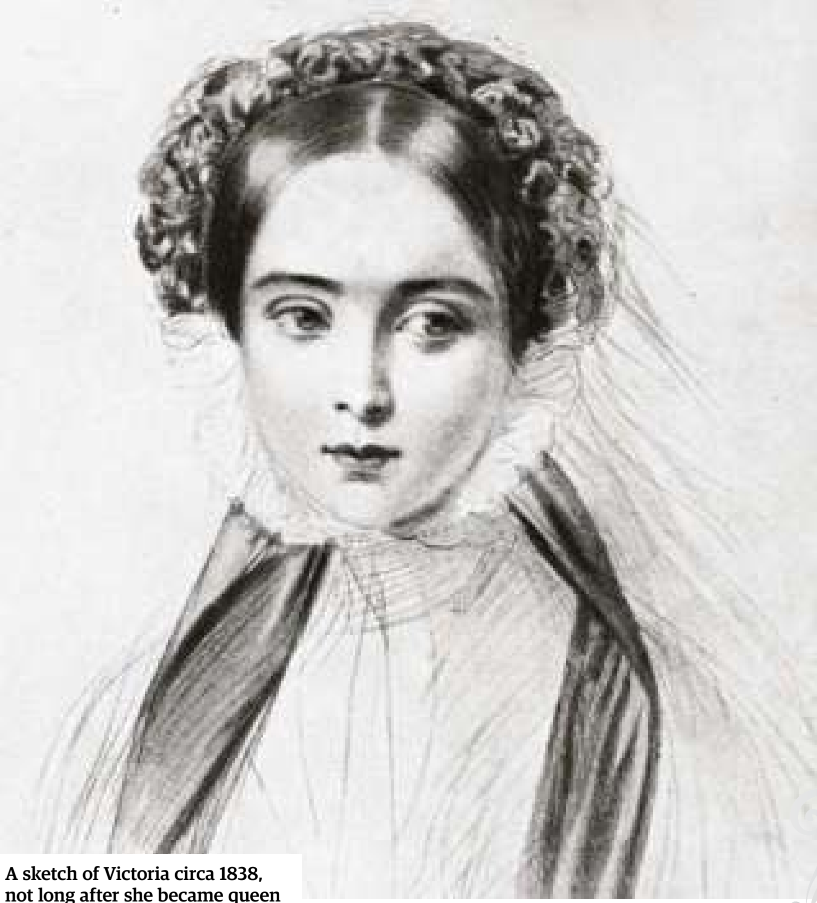
An etching of Victoria as a child from *The Strand Magazine*



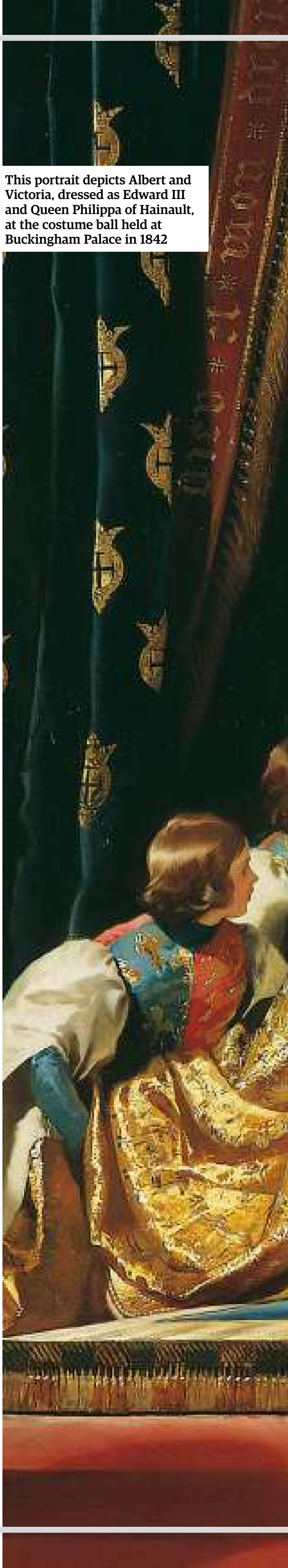
Victoria kept many pets throughought her life, including Coco, an African grey parrot



The princess taking a donkey ride through Kensington Gardens with her mother



A sketch of Victoria circa 1838, not long after she became queen



This portrait depicts Albert and Victoria, dressed as Edward III and Queen Philippa of Hainault, at the costume ball held at Buckingham Palace in 1842

VICTORIA AND ALBERT

They are celebrated as one of history's greatest love stories, but what was the truth behind this passionate relationship?

Words **Catherine Curzon**

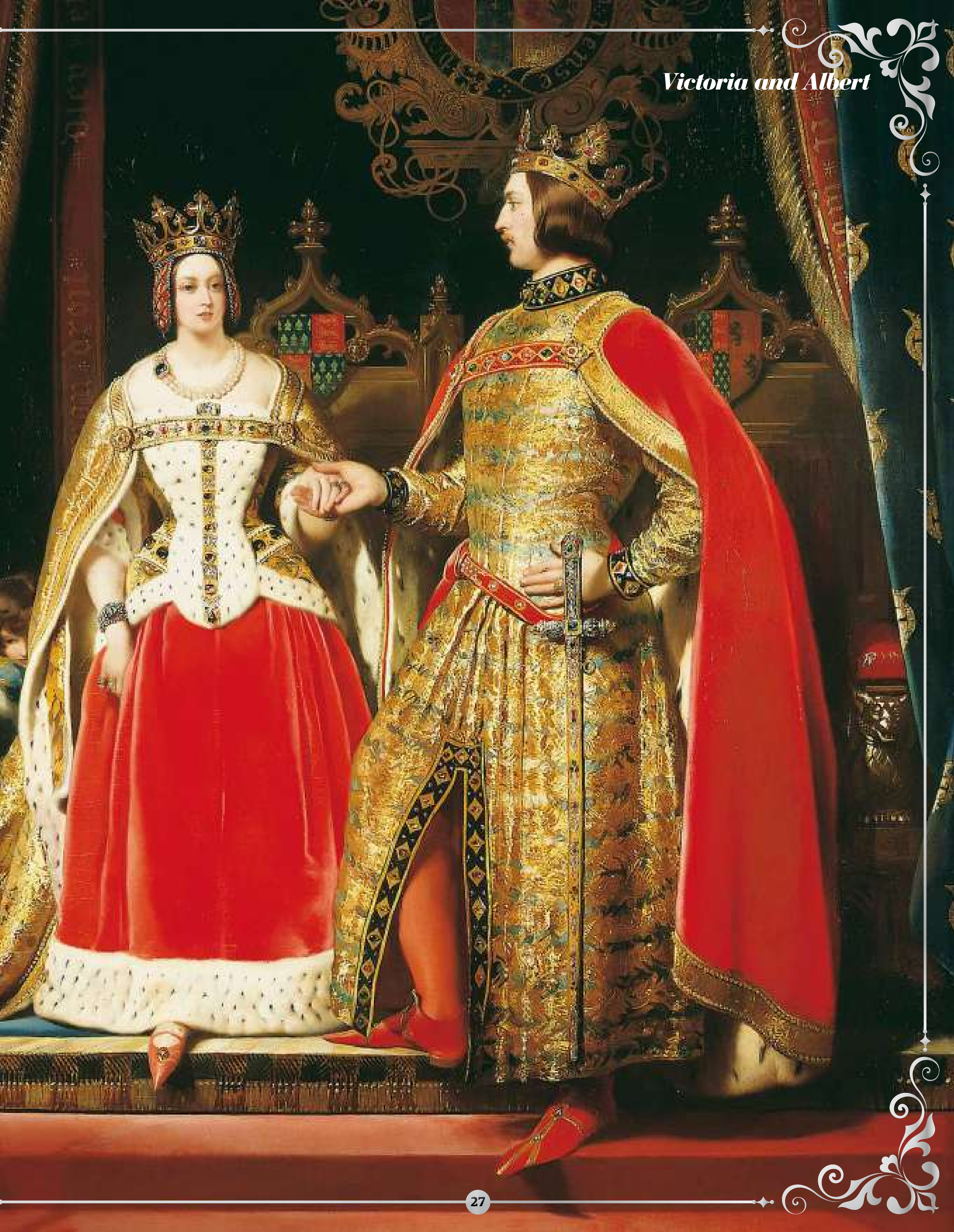
The marriage of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert is one of the most famous and romantic in royal history. Their names are entwined in the public consciousness, and the story of Victoria's untouchable grief following the death of her husband is one that has been told in literature, film and television for years.

Victoria and Albert were just two years old when his grandmother first mooted the idea of wedding the two cousins. Although it was a little too early to get the ball rolling just then, it was a plan that never really went away. As Victoria drew ever closer to the British throne, she became a more and more attractive marital prospect and by 1836, their uncle, Leopold, King of the Belgians, was giving the idea of a marriage between the youngsters some serious thought. Britain commanded a huge amount of global power at the time and since Leopold was the brother of Victoria's mother, the Duchess of Kent, and Albert's father, the Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, it was the perfect way to keep that power in the family and ensure that there were no unexpected marital surprises.

Leopold couldn't imagine any reason for the various interested parties to dislike his scheme, but he hadn't considered King William IV, who loathed the ambitious Duchess of Kent. When Leopold prevailed upon her to invite their brother, the Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, to England and bring his two sons along, William knew that marriage plans were afoot.

The aging king, however, had ideas of his own. He didn't want Victoria to marry into the House of Coburg and had hopes of making a match between his niece and Prince Alexander of the Netherlands, but Alexander's scant desires were dashed as soon as Victoria laid eyes on Albert in 1836. She was blown away by his good looks while Alexander, she decided, wasn't her type at all. Measured against Albert with his blue eyes and well-proportioned features, Alexander was forgettably plain.

From Victoria's journal entry for the day she met Albert, it is clear she was quite smitten: "Albert […] is extremely handsome; his hair is about the same colour as mine; his eyes are large and blue, and he has a beautiful nose, and a very sweet mouth with fine teeth; but the charm of his countenance



is his expression, which is most delightful; c'est a la fois [it is at the same time] full of goodness and sweetness, and very clever and intelligent."

Although no formal engagement took place following the visit of the Coburg party, the meeting was such a roaring success that the Duchess of Kent and the Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha were certain that their children would one day be married. King Leopold couldn't have been happier.

When Victoria became queen in 1837 she knew that the question of a husband was one that would soon have to be settled, but she was determined to take her time and settle into her new role before she took on another daunting project such as marriage. She did make enquiries about Albert's understanding of what it meant to be consort to a queen, ensuring that he was prepared for the role and ready and willing to perform it. By the time Albert returned to Great Britain in October 1839 to visit Victoria, the matter of matrimony was all that was on their minds.

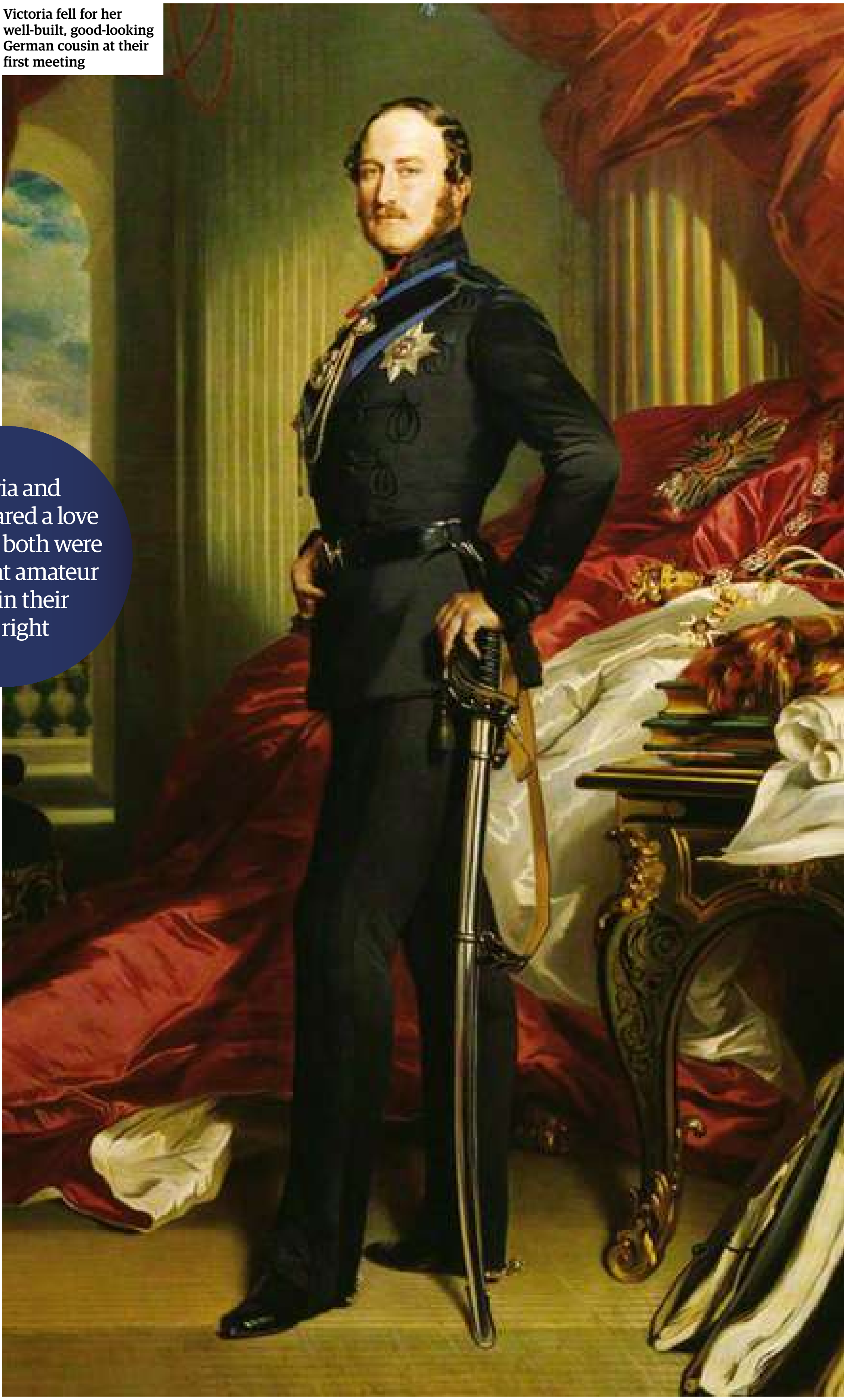
On 15 October 1839, five days after Albert arrived in Windsor, Queen Victoria proposed to him and, of course, he accepted. The forthcoming marriage was announced to the Privy Council the following month, and Albert was duly naturalised by an Act of Parliament and awarded the title of Royal Highness. Once all the necessary boxes had been ticked, Victoria and Albert's wedding took place on 10 February 1840 at the Chapel Royal in St James's Palace.

From the start this was a love match and Victoria and Albert's wedding night wasn't spent unhappily, like some of their predecessors', but in each other's arms. Victoria was taken ill in the evening but by nightfall was recovered, and she and Albert spent their first night as husband and wife in some pretty rapturous embraces!

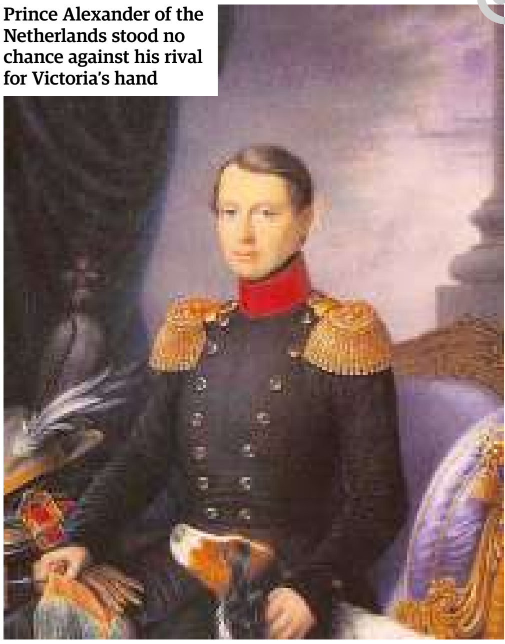
Victoria had already effectively banished her mother to a distant corner of Buckingham Palace and when the queen married Albert, it signalled the final act of her transition from a sheltered girl into a confident monarch. Melbourne had been a

"She was determined to take her time and settle into her new role before taking on another daunting project such as marriage"

Victoria and Albert shared a love of art, and both were competent amateur artists in their own right


Victoria fell for her well-built, good-looking German cousin at their first meeting

The royal couple pose for a photograph in court dress in 1854



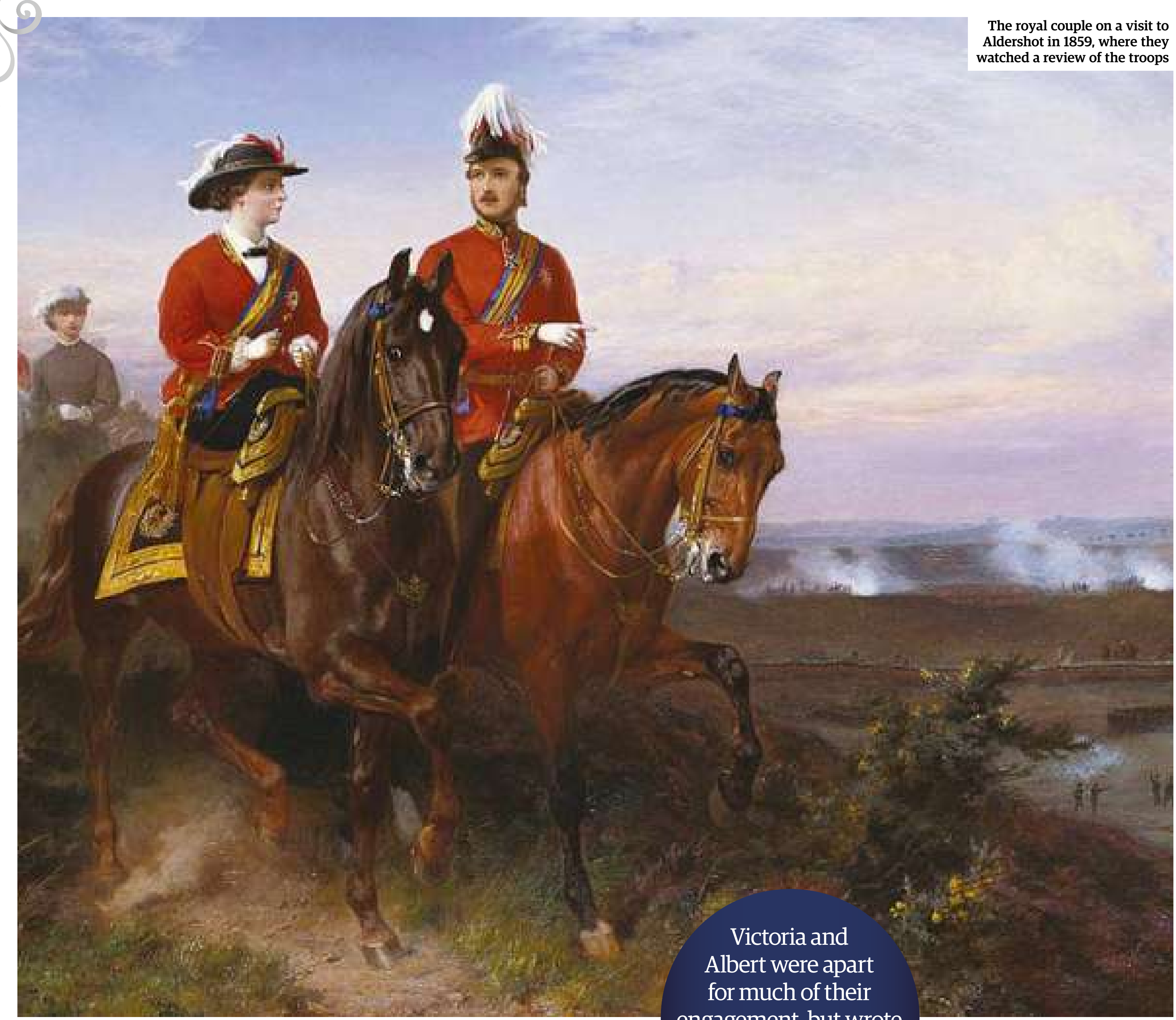
Prince Alexander of the Netherlands stood no chance against his rival for Victoria's hand

father figure and Victoria's closest political advisor, preparing her for the throne, but Albert now took that vital position and for the rest of his life, no one would be closer to the queen than he.

Although Victoria had no doubts that Albert was the man she wanted, the public weren't quite so convinced. They wondered at his background and thought that he had cynically wormed his way into the bed and heart of their young sovereign. It was an opinion that some Members of Parliament shared, and prime minister Lord Melbourne, one of Victoria's most trusted advisors, advised her against giving her new spouse the title of King Consort, worrying that it would stoke up existing anti-German emotions. Instead he was titled as Prince Albert until 1857, when he was granted the official title of Prince Consort.

As Albert encountered suspicions from the public and Lord Melbourne advised Victoria to tread carefully, Parliament also objected to any suggestion that Albert be granted a peerage, fearing that he might try to involve himself in political decisions if he had a seat in the House of Lords. But Albert didn't care about British titles and believed that he, as a duke of Saxony, outranked even the royal dukes of the United Kingdom. Any peerage that Parliament could grant him would only be a demotion, he decided, so it was better to have none at all. In case there could be any doubt as to how unwelcome he was, when Parliament granted Albert an annuity it was for £30,000 – £20,000 less than his predecessors.

Albert arrived in a household that was already run like the proverbial well-oiled machine. Though happy in his marriage he wanted to feel useful, and in keeping with his gender and the era, he believed that a man should be the master of his own house – even a man who was wed to a queen. Yet the royal household already had a mistress and that was Baroness Lehzen, Victoria's lifelong confidante. Albert and



The royal couple on a visit to Aldershot in 1859, where they watched a review of the troops

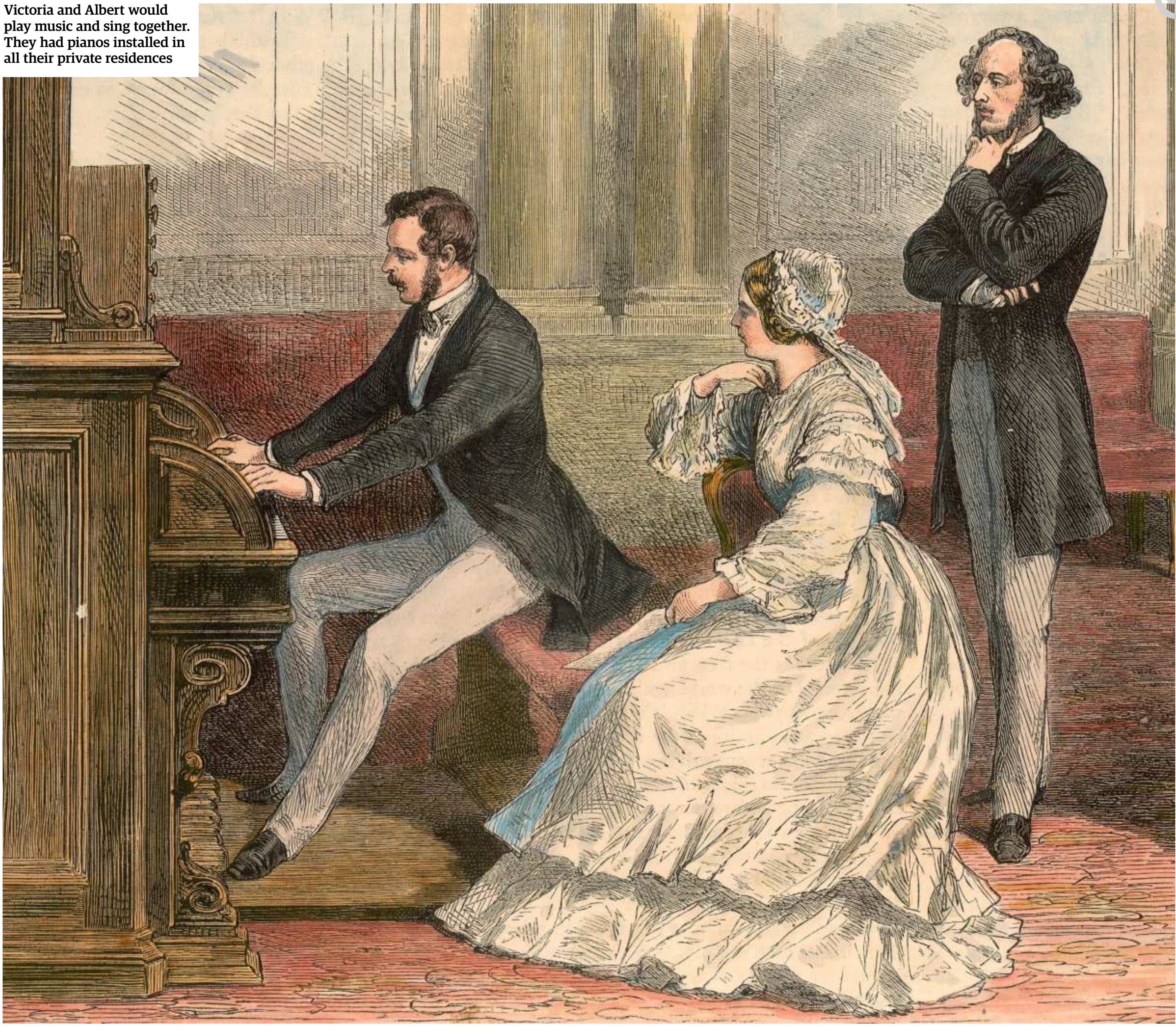
Victoria and Albert were apart for much of their engagement, but wrote many passionate letters to one another

the baroness disagreed from the off. She dug in her heels and refused to budge, and the more she did, the more determined he became to unseat her. It was a clash of personalities and ambition that could only end in one way. With Victoria devoted to her prince and determined to be the most dutiful wife a husband could hope for, Baroness Lehzen's days were numbered.

When Victoria fell pregnant within weeks of the wedding, there could be no question of Albert's place in her life. Though he had no formal political duties, he took an interest in politics and was a sounding board for his wife as his public profile increased. He won the hearts of his wife's subjects in the summer of 1840 when Edward Oxford took a shot at Victoria. Albert responded with courage and a clear head, leading to admiring headlines as the country finally began to share the queen's love for her spouse. Soon after the attempt on Victoria's life, Parliament passed the Regency Act of 1840, which named Albert as regent should the monarch die before the next heir to the throne reached the age of majority. The public welcomed the move, finally believing that the queen's husband was the best man for the job.

Albert and Victoria's home life was serene and when the ousted Lehzen eventually left England to return home to Germany, Albert was finally able to feel like master of his house. It was a role that Victoria delightedly allowed him to assume. Kept busy with her duties as queen, she was happy for Albert to manage the affairs and education of their nine children and he did so with gusto, following the educational model that had served him so well. Though it didn't suit all of their children, remarkably all nine of the royal offspring reached adulthood. In Victorian Britain this was quite a feat and some credit for this must go to the Prince Consort, a modern and highly engaged father who kept a close eye on the wellbeing of his children.

Even when Victoria was pregnant with her many children, she never shirked her royal responsibilities, and the importance of her husband's support at home can't be overstated.



Victoria and Albert would play music and sing together. They had pianos installed in all their private residences

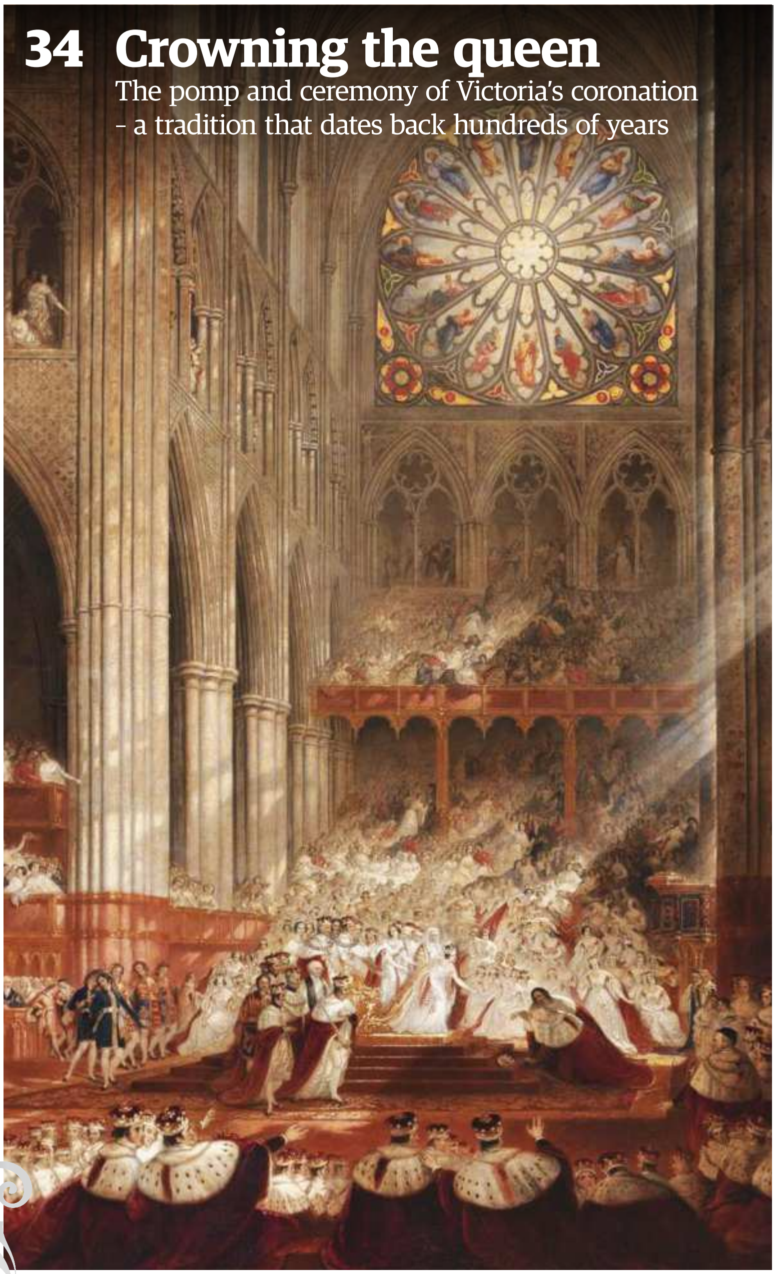
Albert relieved her of the burden of domesticity on top of duty, running the household and proving to be a careful and trustworthy household manager. Though their public face was one of the model of Victorian respectability, in private that relationship was far more intimate and relaxed.

Both at their Isle of Wight hideaway, Osborne House, and their beloved Scottish retreat at Balmoral, Victoria and Albert lived in a manner that would have been recognisable to most middle- and upper-class Victorians. What made their relationship unique, however, was the reversed power dynamic. Though Albert had public duties and political interests, it was his wife who held the balance of power to the outside world. At home, of course, things were different. Albert was master of the house as he had wished to be, and his busy but loving wife was perfectly happy to let him take that particular responsibility.

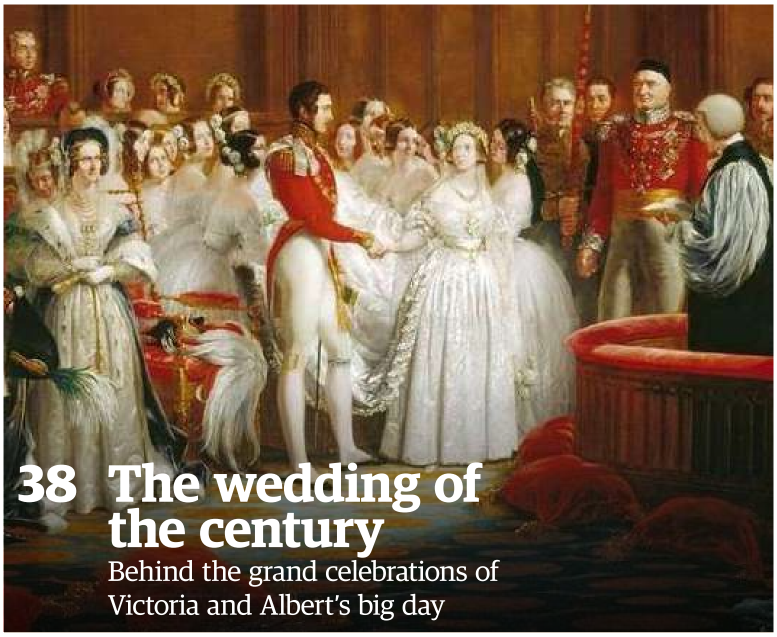
At home Albert was Queen Victoria's rock, and though much has been written of his strict education regime, there's little doubt that the royal family was a happy one. The children were used to the continued presence of their father both as teacher and playmate, and he was able to bridge the gap between the incredibly busy queen and her offspring, ensuring continuity for both. It's little that Victoria felt Albert's absence so deeply when he died in 1861. Over the long years of her life she would never truly recover from his death, lamenting the loss not only of her husband, but her best and most precious friend.

> *"Even in my dreams I never imagined that I should find so much love on Earth"* – Prince Albert, in a letter to Victoria shortly after the couple were engaged

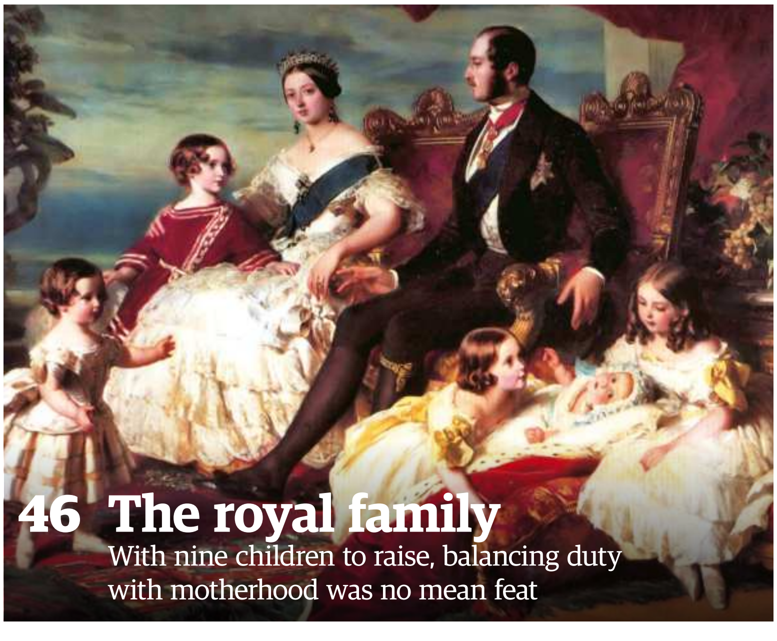
VICTORIA'S EARLY REIGN



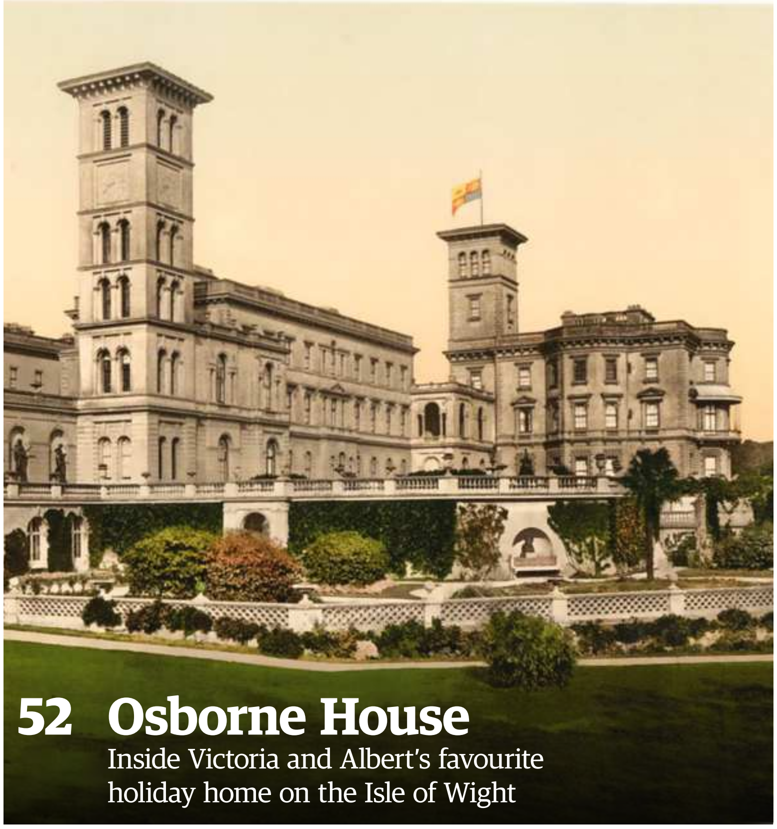
34 Crowning the queen
The pomp and ceremony of Victoria's coronation – a tradition that dates back hundreds of years



38 The wedding of the century
Behind the grand celebrations of Victoria and Albert's big day

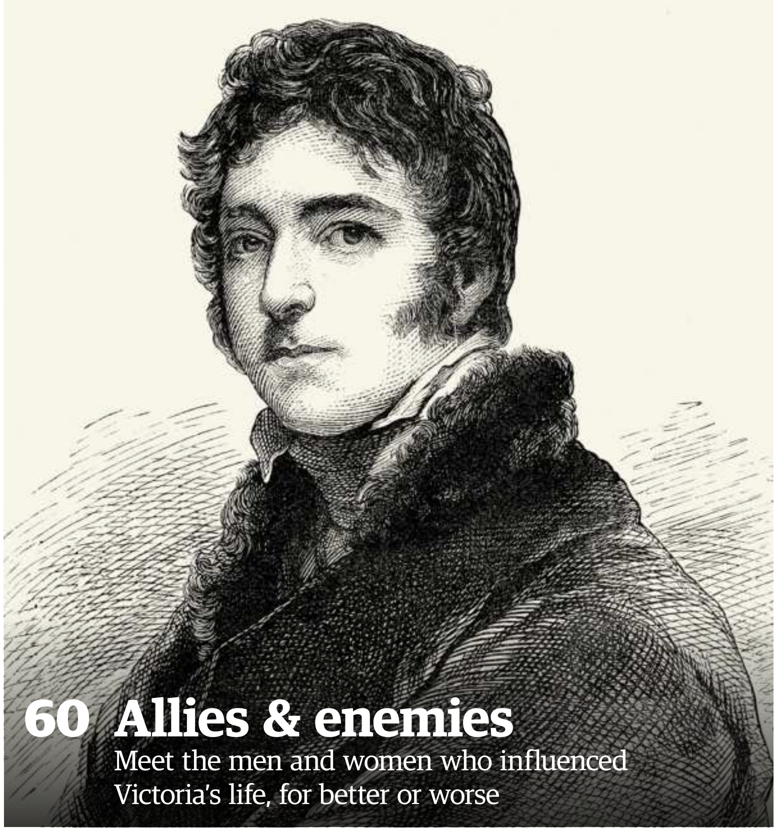


46 The royal family
With nine children to raise, balancing duty with motherhood was no mean feat



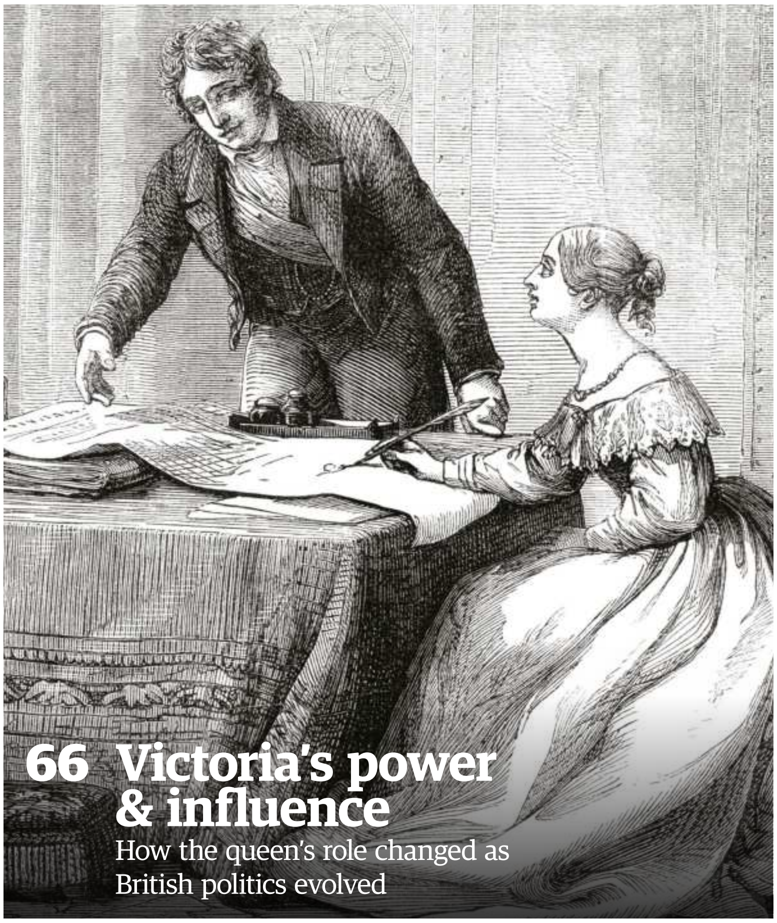
52 Osborne House

Inside Victoria and Albert's favourite holiday home on the Isle of Wight



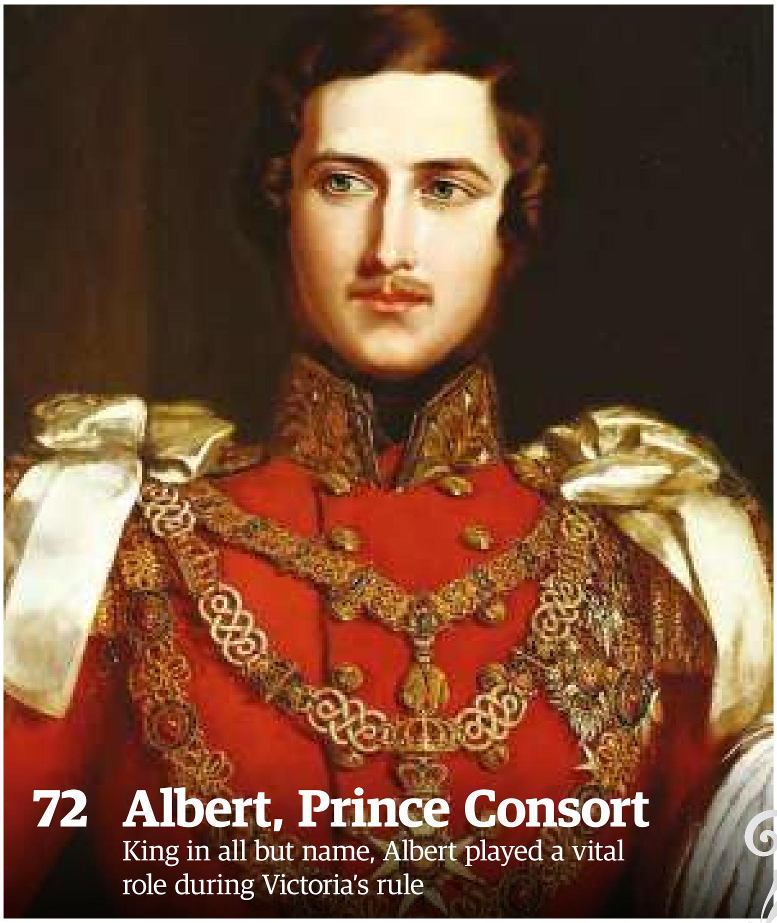
60 Allies & enemies

Meet the men and women who influenced Victoria's life, for better or worse



66 Victoria's power & influence

How the queen's role changed as British politics evolved



72 Albert, Prince Consort

King in all but name, Albert played a vital role during Victoria's rule

CROWNING THE QUEEN

Behind the pomp and pageantry of the sovereign's special day

Words **Jodie Tyley**

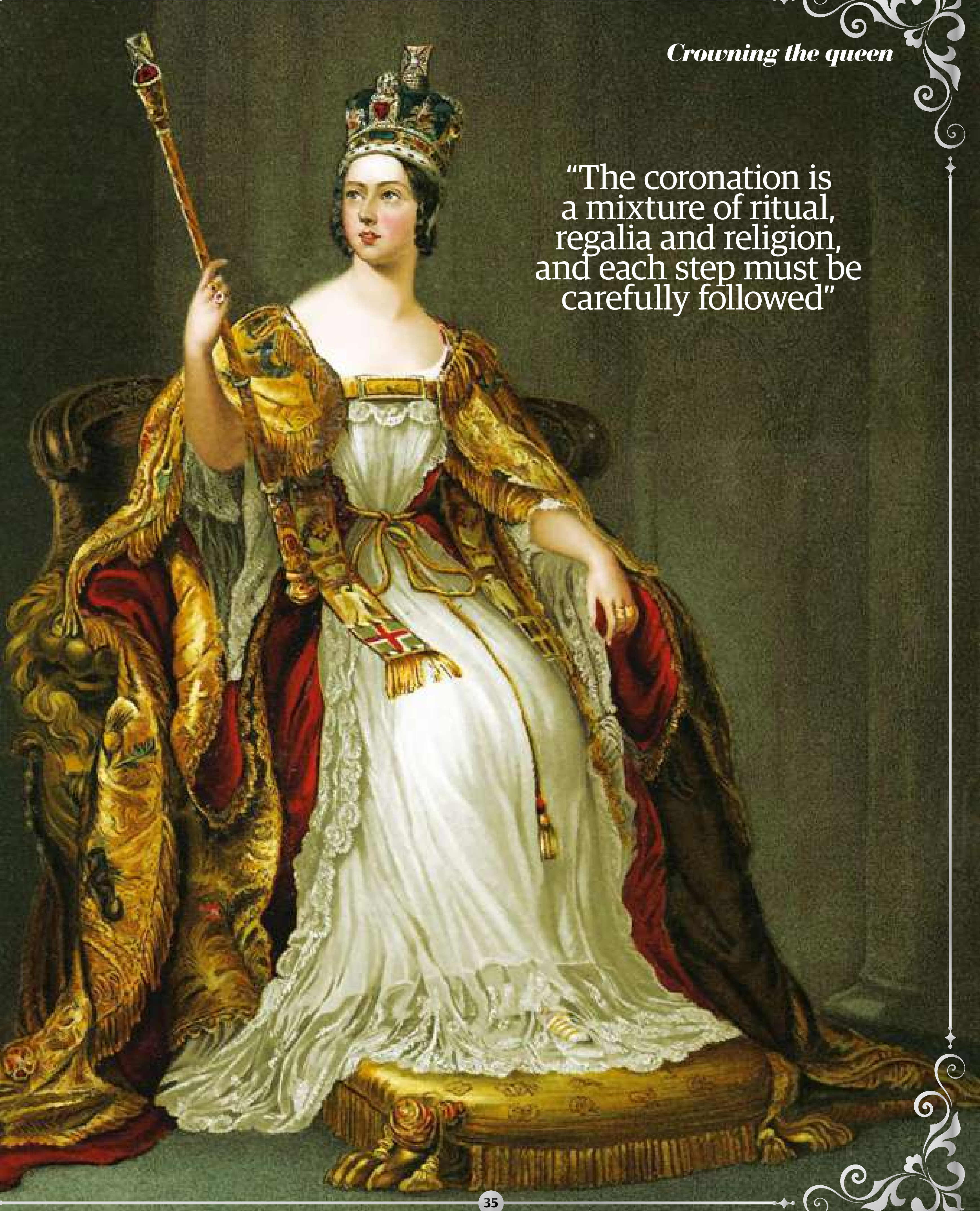
Victoria ascended to the throne aged just 18 when her uncle, William IV, died in 1837. A year later, she was crowned queen of the British Empire in a ceremony that dates back more than 1,000 years: the coronation.

On 28 June 1838 the young sovereign awoke to the sounds of guns and bands as the build up to the momentous occasion began. By the time she got up at 7am she saw a "curious spectacle - crowds of people up Constitution Hill - soldiers, bands..." Despite being a Thursday, over 400,000 turned out to witness the coronation, aided by the new railways that made it easier to travel to London. Victoria was delighted with what she saw: "There were millions of my loyal subjects, assembled in every spot, to witness the procession," she wrote in her diary. "I really cannot say how proud I felt to be the queen of such a nation."

She watched from within the Gold State Coach - an eight-horse-drawn carriage that's been used at the coronation of every British monarch since George IV (who reigned from 1820-1830). The royal occupants rarely enjoyed the ride, though, with William IV stating it was like being on board a ship "tossing in a rough sea". Victoria would come to loathe its lack of comfort, too, complaining of its "distressing oscillations." The procession took a long route from her new home, Buckingham Palace, to Westminster Abbey - the setting of coronations for 900 years.

The ceremony itself is a mixture of ritual, regalia and religion, and each step must be carefully followed before the crown is bestowed upon the new monarch. The king- or queen-to-be places one hand on the Bible and swears an oath to maintain the Church of England and to rule according the law. Then they are 'anointed, blessed and consecrated' by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the most senior cleric in the Church - a tradition dating back to 1066. The monarch's head is anointed with Holy Oil while they sit in King Edward I's chair, made in around 1300, and since then 26 sovereigns have been crowned in this chair.

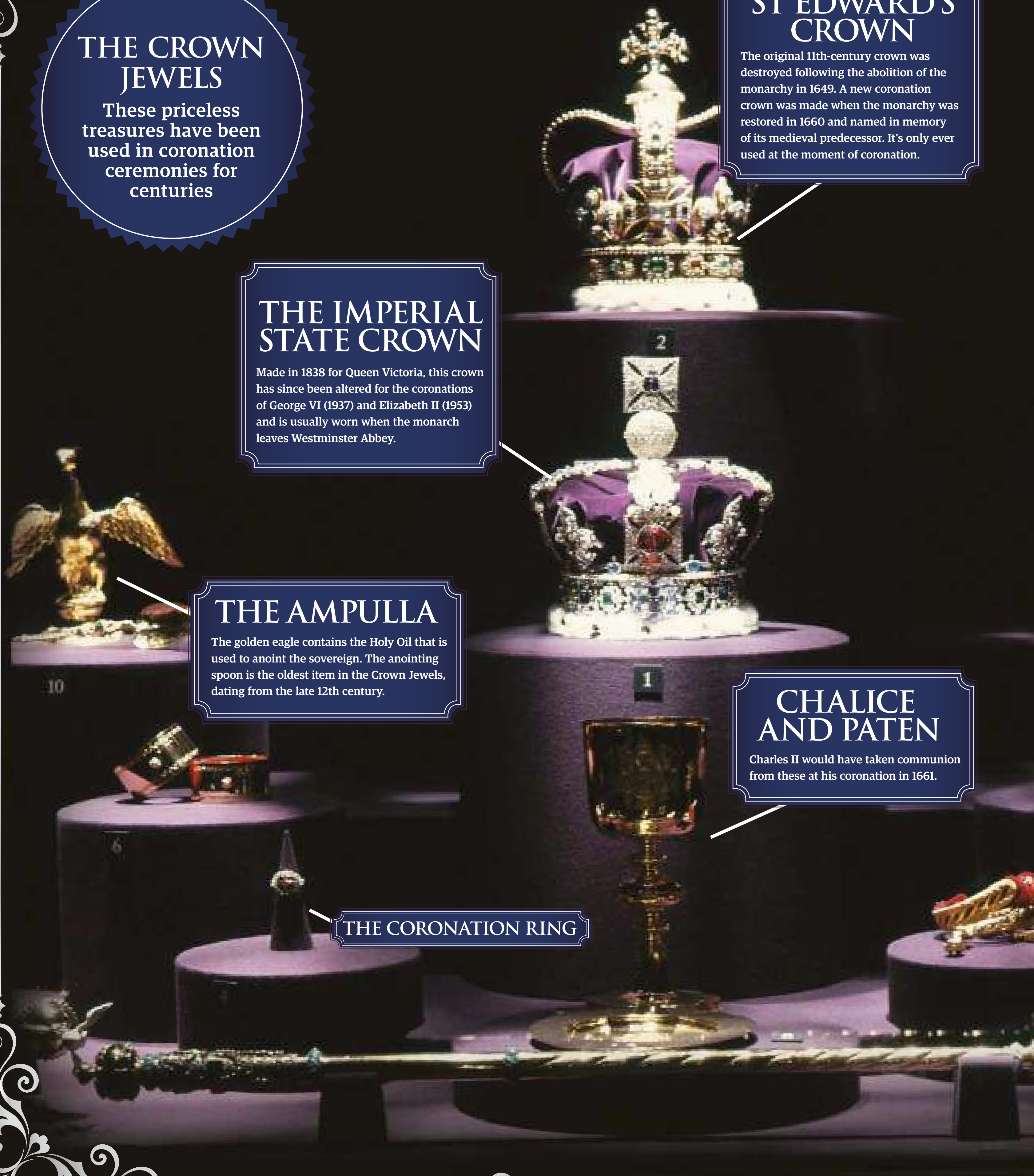
The monarch is then cloaked in the coronation robes before being invested with precious regalia known as the Crown Jewels, which have been used in coronation ceremonies since 1661. These include the swords, spurs and armills, followed by the Orb that symbolises the Christian world and is placed in the monarch's right hand to represent supreme power. The royal ring is placed on the sovereign's finger, and they are then presented with the Sceptre and the rod. Their purpose was described at the coronation of William the Conqueror in 1066: "by the sceptre uprising in the kingdom are controlled, and the rod gathers and confines those men who stray."



"The coronation is
a mixture of ritual,
regalia and religion,
and each step must be
carefully followed"

THE CROWN JEWELS

These priceless treasures have been used in coronation ceremonies for centuries



ST EDWARD'S CROWN

The original 11th-century crown was destroyed following the abolition of the monarchy in 1649. A new coronation crown was made when the monarchy was restored in 1660 and named in memory of its medieval predecessor. It's only ever used at the moment of coronation.

THE IMPERIAL STATE CROWN

Made in 1838 for Queen Victoria, this crown has since been altered for the coronations of George VI (1937) and Elizabeth II (1953) and is usually worn when the monarch leaves Westminster Abbey.

THE AMPULLA

The golden eagle contains the Holy Oil that is used to anoint the sovereign. The anointing spoon is the oldest item in the Crown Jewels, dating from the late 12th century.

CHALICE AND PATEN

Charles II would have taken communion from these at his coronation in 1661.

THE CORONATION RING

© Alamy; WIKI

After the investiture part of the ceremony comes the most important item of all – the crown. St Edward's Crown is considered as the official coronation crown but Victoria felt it was far too heavy for her four-foot 11-inch (150-centimetre) frame. She opted instead for a new Imperial State Crown, made especially for her and set with over 3,000 gems. Victoria described when the archbishop placed it on her head as "the most beautiful impressive moment." As is tradition, the guests in the Abbey cried three times, "God save the Queen" and the peers of the realm donned their coronets, small crowns that are only worn for a royal coronation. "The shouts, which were very great, the drums, the trumpets, the firing of the guns – all at the same moment, rendered the spectacle most imposing," she added.

To the crowd waiting outside, the day went without a hitch. Those inside the Abbey, however, would have witnessed something very different. As future prime minister Benjamin Disraeli put it: "The Queen looked very well, and performed her part with great grace and completeness, which cannot be said of the other performers; they were always in doubt as to what came next, and you saw the want of rehearsal."

He might have been referring to the moment a confused bishop missed out two pages in the Order of Service and had to call Victoria back to do it again. Or perhaps the time when the peers proceeded to pay homage and one elderly gentleman fell down the stairs. In that moment Victoria cast etiquette aside and went to meet him, causing a ripple of admiration among the guests. Even the kind-hearted queen herself couldn't help but complain – in the privacy of her diary, of course – when the archbishop forced a ring that was made for her little finger onto her ring finger. She had to soak her hand in iced water after the ceremony and later wrote: "I had the greatest difficulty in taking it off again, which I at last succeeded in doing, but not without great pain."

The ceremony lasted five hours but the 19-year-old got through it with poise and patience. It was a testing first step into a long and eventful reign.

THE ORB

This symbolises the Christian world, with a cross mounted on a globe. It is placed in the sovereign's right hand and then placed on the Altar.

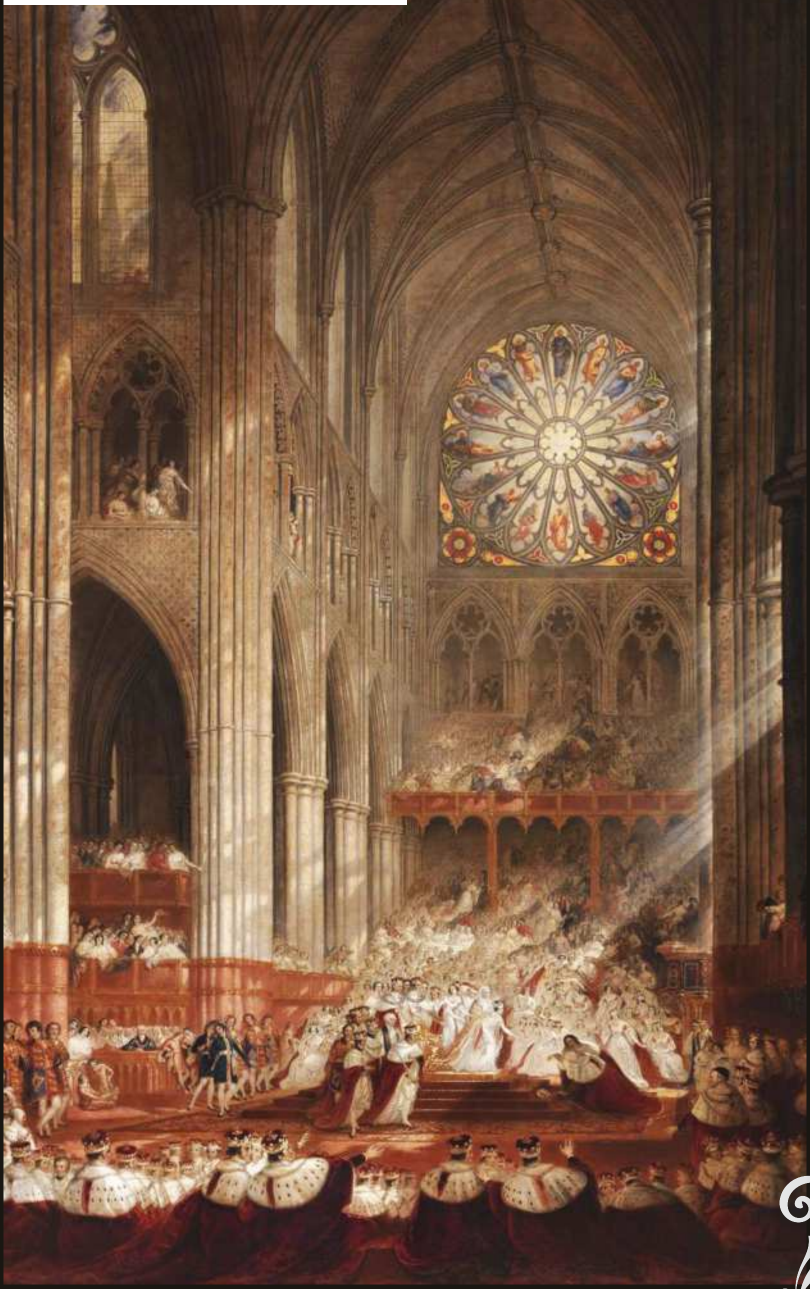
SPURS

Gold spurs have been used since 1189 and the coronation of Richard the Lionheart, symbolising knighthood. These were made in 1661.

ARMILLS

These gold bracelets represent sincerity and wisdom.

THE SCEPTRE AND ROD



This painting by John Martin captured the moment an elderly peer fell down the steps and Victoria rose to help him

Victoria and Albert, young and very much in love, on their wedding day

THE WEDDING OF THE CENTURY

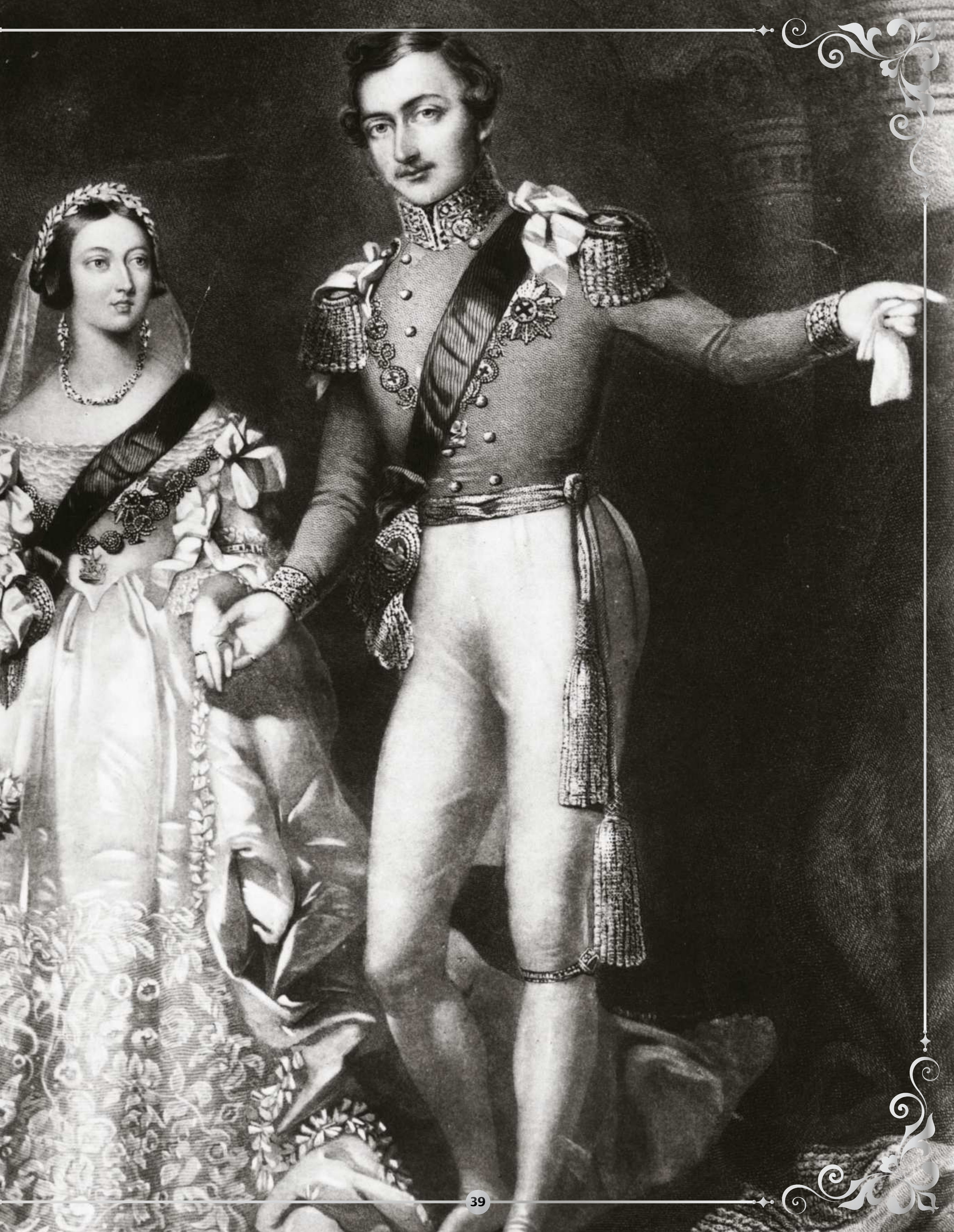
A headstrong young queen and her conscientious cousin were brought together by family but married for love

Words **June Woolerton**

Their romance remains one of the most famous in royal history but the marriage of Victoria and Albert almost didn't happen. The couple grew up knowing that many in their families wanted them to wed but, as the prospect of saying 'I do' drew closer, both expressed doubts and looked to futures without each other. However, one short meeting turned a family wish into passionate love and led to the deep devotion of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.

Their royal wedding, on 10 February 1840 at the Chapel Royal, St James's Palace, was a marriage their relatives had pushed for from the couple's earliest years, as soon as it became clear that Victoria was likely to become queen. Born on 24 May 1819, she was the only child of George III's fourth son, Edward, Duke of Kent, and his ambitious wife, Victoria. Baby Victoria lost both her father and her paternal grandfather before her first birthday and, as the reign of her uncle, George IV, progressed, it became increasingly clear that the young princess would one day inherit his throne. He had lost his only legitimate child in 1817 when Princess Charlotte of Wales had died in childbirth. By the time the young Victoria turned five, she was the hope of her dynasty.

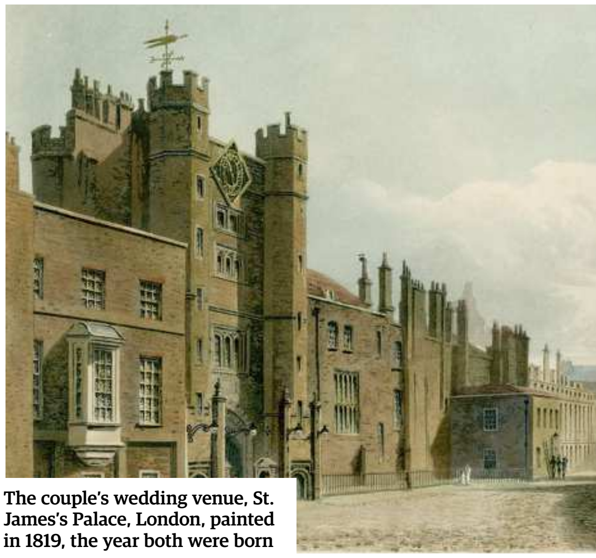
Not that they showed it publicly. She lived in the rather rundown Kensington Palace with her mother while George IV refused to grant them an allowance. Instead, they relied on the generosity of her mother's brother, Leopold, who had personal reasons for nurturing his young niece. Leopold was the widower of Charlotte, the lost heir. He had made plans for his prospective role as Prince Consort during his brief marriage and now that his niece rather than his wife stood to take the throne, he developed a very firm idea of who could shoulder the dreams he had been forced to abandon. His older brother, Ernest, later Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, had welcomed a second son, Albert, on 26 August 1819. Leopold, with the backing of his mother, Augusta, began to talk of Victoria and Albert as the perfect match.



However, Leopold wasn't the only person with plans to marry off the extremely eligible princess. A long list of royal suitors was suggested for Victoria, with one paper confidently reporting as early as 1828 that she would wed another cousin, Prince George of Cumberland. During her early years, the young Victoria was linked to royals including the duke of Orléans, as well as one of the princes of Orange. In 1830, George IV was succeeded by his younger brother, William IV, and the new king wanted his niece and heir to marry into the Dutch royal family, much to the fury of Leopold, who was now a monarch himself, having accepted the Belgian throne in 1831. When William brought his marriage candidate over to visit Victoria, Leopold wrote to his niece, describing the action as "very extraordinary." But he was no stranger to matchmaking visits himself...

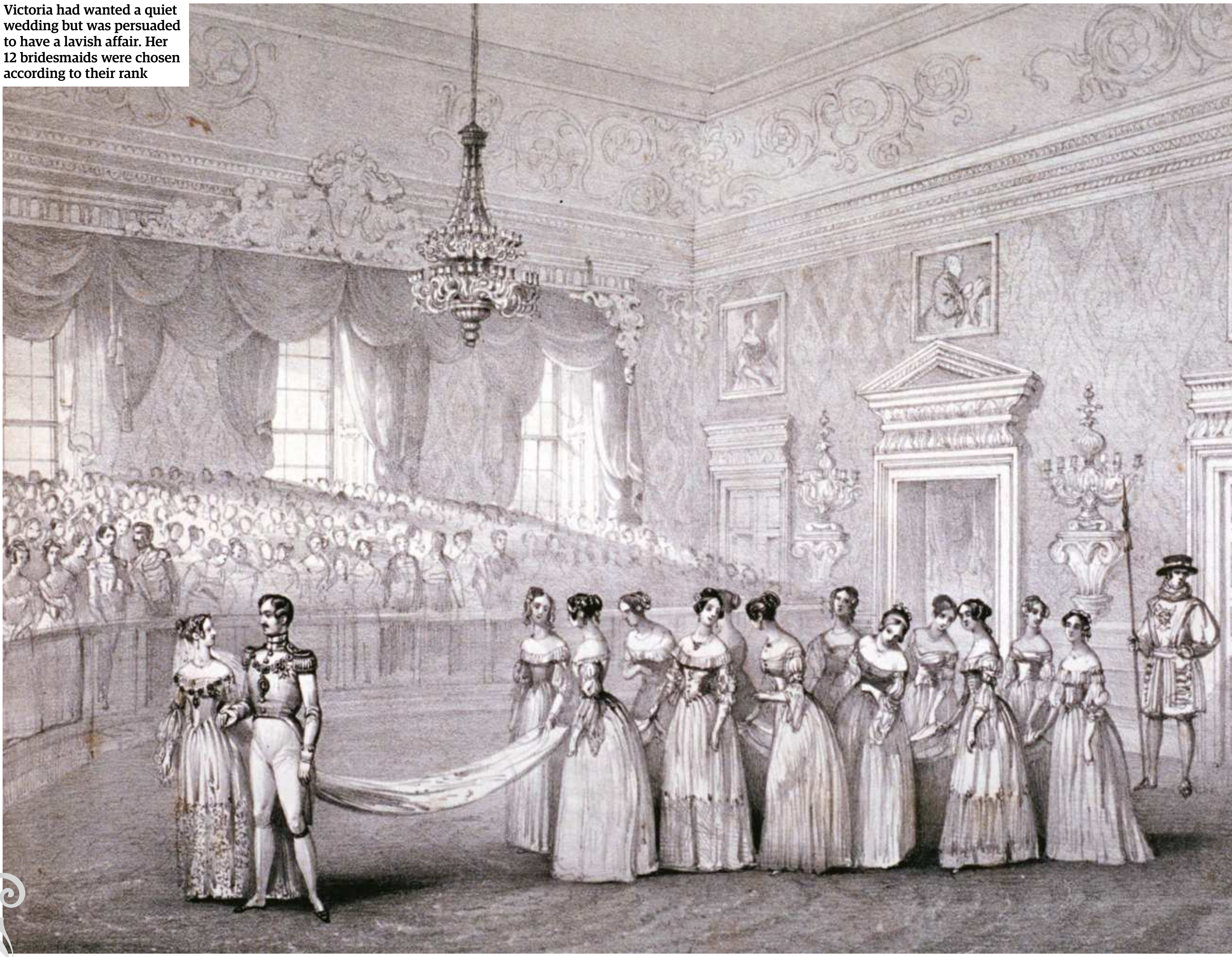
In 1836, Leopold arranged a trip to England for Prince Albert and his older brother, Ernest. The young Victoria, who had been raised by her mother in strict seclusion at Kensington Palace, was more than eager for company of her own age. She loved any opportunity to dance and so the balls and parties held for the young princes were a welcome distraction for her. Albert, however, had been less enthusiastic. He hadn't enjoyed the long journey to England and he found the constant round of entertainments exhausting.

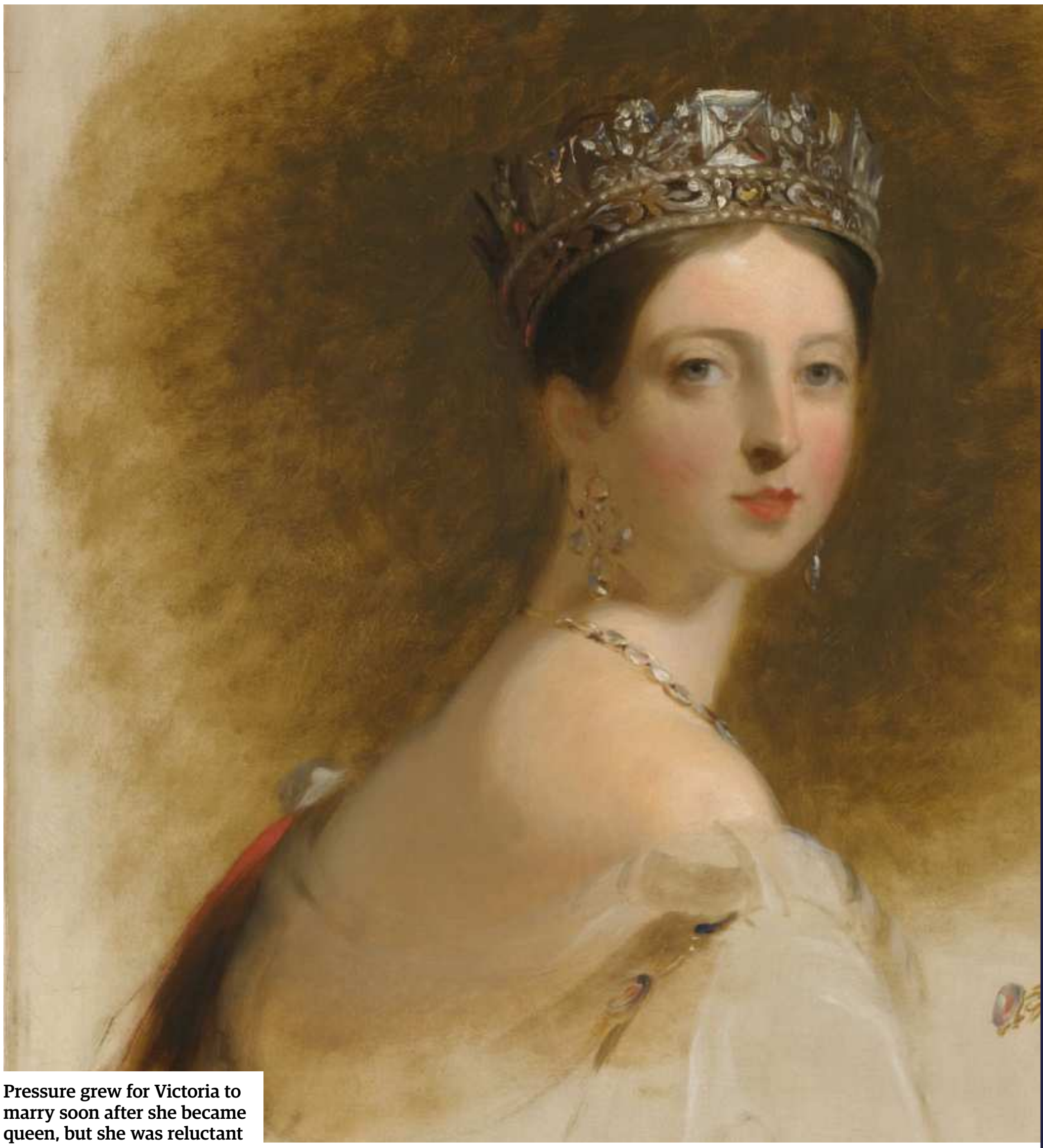
But both Victoria and Albert were aware that this was more than just a summer holiday. Leopold hoped this trip would mark the start of the cousins' trip to the altar. Victoria embraced the idea, writing to her uncle that her cousin "is very handsome", and adding "I thank you... for the prospect of great happiness you have contributed to give me in the



The couple's wedding venue, St. James's Palace, London, painted in 1819, the year both were born

Victoria had wanted a quiet wedding but was persuaded to have a lavish affair. Her 12 bridesmaids were chosen according to their rank





Pressure grew for Victoria to marry soon after she became queen, but she was reluctant

person of dear Albert… he possesses every quality that could be desired to render me perfectly happy." The young prince, however, was less effusive with his only comment being "She is very amiable."

Albert was just as circumspect the following year when Victoria became queen on the death of William IV. He sent his cousin a brief note of congratulations but contact between the two began to falter and Albert started to express concerns that the young queen was "incredibly stubborn" and prone to "extreme obstinacy." Victoria, meanwhile, was relishing her new role and the freedom it brought, most notably from her controlling mother. King Leopold now consulted her as an equal, writing to her about the best way to educate Albert as a potential consort. However, doubts were beginning to creep into Victoria's mind about the marriage, while visits from other German cousins and Grand Duke Alexander of Russia had left her giddy with excitement. Her beloved prime minister, Lord Melbourne, was also less than keen on the match with Albert and, by early 1839, Victoria was speaking with determination about putting any marriage plans on hold, for several years at least.

Leopold wasn't deterred. He had arranged another visit to England for Albert but, ahead of the trip, Victoria wrote to him that while she liked the prince as a "friend, and as a cousin, and a brother" she wasn't sure she felt enough for him to be happy in a marriage. Just to make her position clear, she told her uncle that she had never promised to wed Albert. Her cousin, who had spent his teenage years being prepared for life as a consort, laid down his own ultimatum. If Victoria didn't make her mind up during his visit, he would withdraw from the race to be her husband. He needn't have worried. Within weeks, he was engaged to the Queen of England.

Victoria had welcomed her cousin with a distinct lack of good grace, writing sulkily to Leopold when Albert was delayed. However, she was ready to meet him when he rode up to Windsor Castle on the evening of 10 October 1839 and the attraction was instant. Albert was pale from seasickness and had no clean clothes to change into as his luggage had been delayed but Victoria didn't care. From the moment she saw him again, she fell in love, writing over the following days that he was

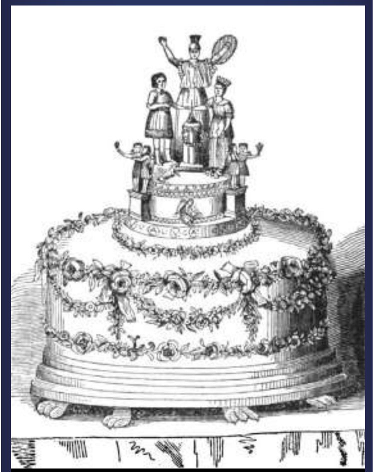
THE QUEEN OF WEDDING CAKES

The huge wedding confection baked to celebrate the royal marriage was as much a talking point as the bride's dress

While the bride and groom took starring roles at the royal wedding of 1840, they had competition. Their wedding cake, a spectacular bake that needed four men to carry it, became a national obsession.

The huge circular confection was three metres (ten feet) in circumference, more than 30 centimetres (one foot) deep and weighed more than 136 kilograms (300 pounds). It also showed the modern touches Victoria and Albert were bringing to the monarchy - while the couple opted for a traditional fruit cake, they chose striking decorations filled with symbolism.

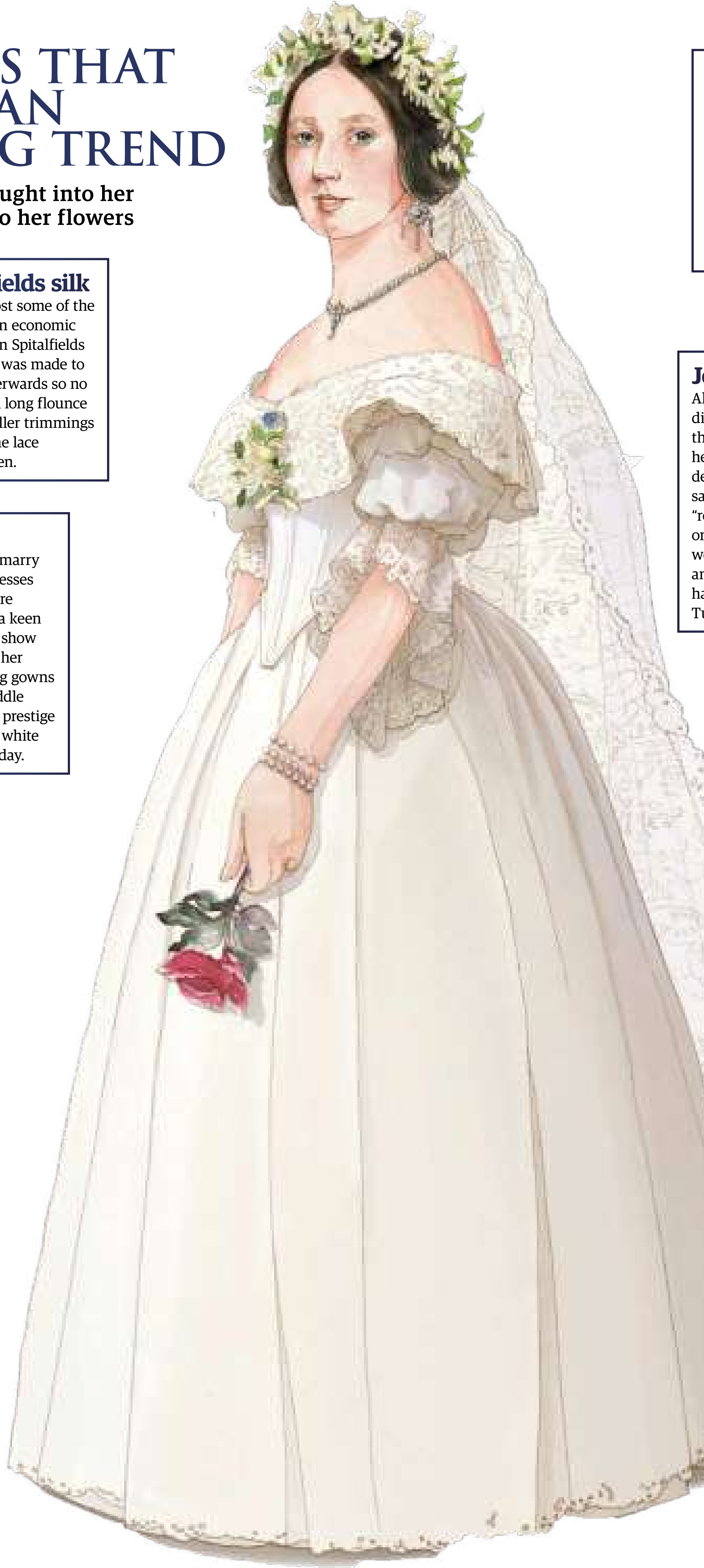
The cake was topped with models of Victoria and Albert in Roman dress, with a figure of Britannia standing between them. A dog, representing fidelity, sat at the groom's feet, while doves, symbolising a happy marriage, nestled near the bride. The cake was festooned with cupids holding emblems of the United Kingdom and decked with orange blossom and myrtle, the floral symbols of love and marriage. The cake was almost as popular as the couple themselves. Lithographs of the bake were made while newspapers reported every detail of the confection, which was created by the cooks at Buckingham Palace. Despite the cake's enormous size, it couldn't feed all the guests, so Victoria and Albert had multiple cakes made so they could offer slices to as many people as possible.



The cake was reported to contain "the most exquisite compounds of all the rich things" while its decorations caused a stir of their own

THE DRESS THAT STARTED AN ENDURING TREND

Victoria put a lot of thought into her choices, from her lace to her flowers



Honiton lace and Spitalfields silk

Queen Victoria wanted her dress to boost some of the cottage industries that were suffering an economic downturn. She chose silk satin woven in Spitalfields and lace from Devon. The Honiton lace was made to a special design that was destroyed afterwards so no one could copy it. Victoria's gown had a long flounce of lace across the bodice as well as smaller trimmings at the end of the half-length sleeves. The lace provided work for dozens of local women.

The bride wore white

Victoria caused a storm by choosing to marry in a creamy white gown, as coloured dresses with gold or silver embroidery were more popular at the time. The young queen, a keen follower of fashion, chose this partly to show off the lace, which was so important to her bridal look. The trend for white wedding gowns soon took off among the upper and middle classes, who wanted to show their own prestige by copying the queen, and the trend of white and cream dresses has endured to this day.

A daring design

Victoria's wedding dress was simpler and more daring than previous royal bridal gowns. Despite the chilly weather, the queen chose a low décolletage with bared shoulders. Victoria also emphasised her figure with a pointed waist on the bodice of her gown. William Dyce, head of the Government School of Design, helped create the pattern for the lace while the dress was created by Mary Bettans.

Shoes, by royal appointment

Victoria chose flat shoes for her wedding, produced by Gundry and Sons who supplied footwear for several members of the royal family from their famous shop in Soho. Made of white satin, the shoes featured a square toe and bands of ribbon crossing the foot in horizontal stripes. They were secured with more long ribbons that tied around Victoria's ankles.

The bride's beloved veil

Victoria used Devon lace for her wedding veil, attached to her hair with flowers. It featured the same, special design used for the lace on her dress. It took local women in Honiton and Beer six weeks to make, providing much-needed work. The veil became one of Victoria's most prized possessions and she asked for it to be placed over her face for her burial.

Jewels fit for a queen

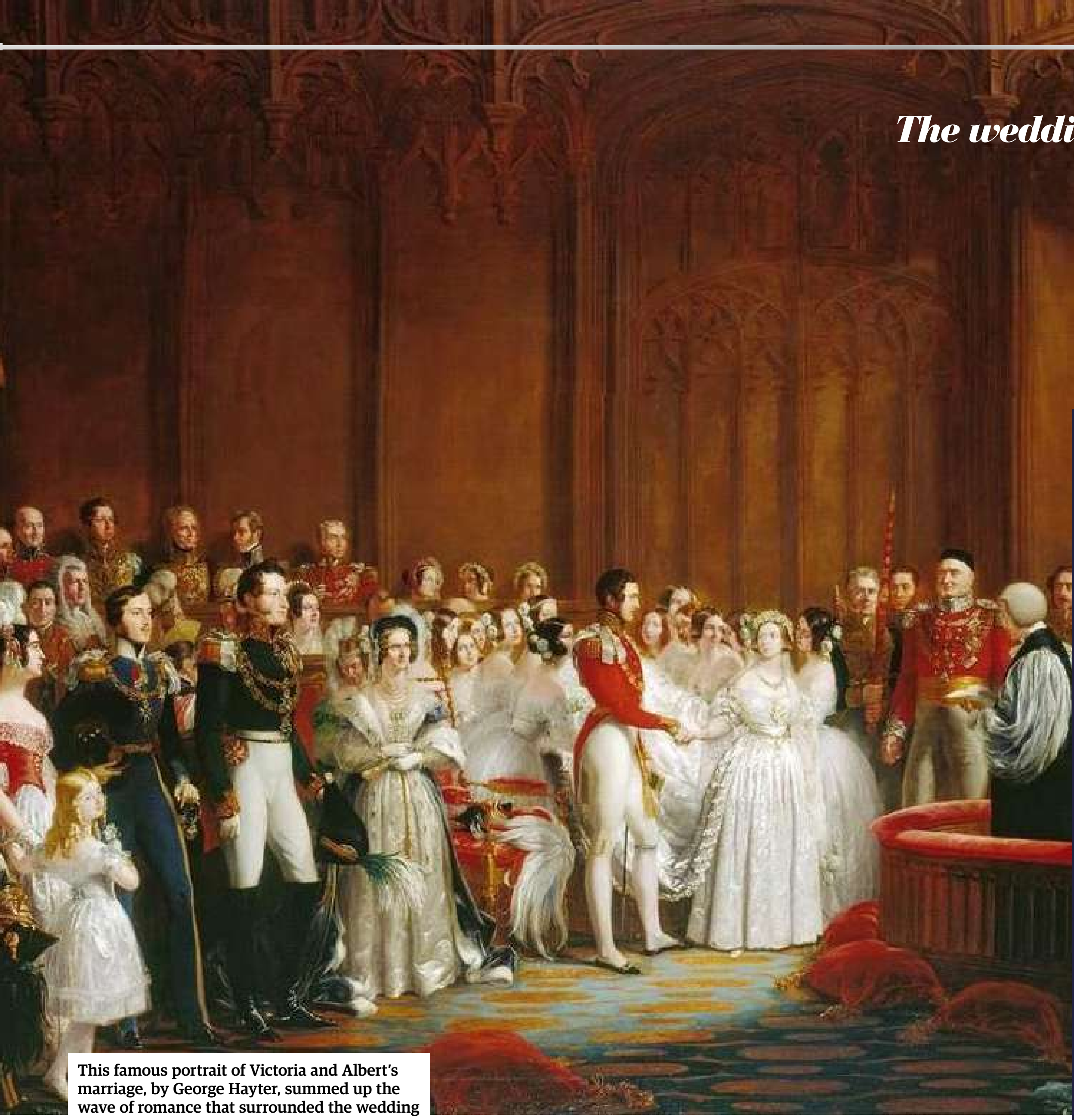
Albert presented his bride with a sapphire, diamond and gold brooch on the eve of their marriage and Victoria added it to her wedding outfit. The young queen described the gem, which featured a huge sapphire surrounded by 12 diamonds, as "really quite beautiful." It would become one of her favourite pieces. Victoria's wedding jewellery also included a necklace and earrings made from diamonds that had been given to her by the Sultan of Turkey soon after she became queen.

Bridal blooms

Victoria shunned a crown for her wedding day, instead holding her veil in place with a wreath of orange blossom. The flower, which also trimmed her dress and train, signifies innocence and eternal love as well as being an ancient symbol of marriage and fertility. Myrtle, another traditional sign of love and marriage, also featured in the bridal blooms. For her wedding posy, Victoria chose a simple arrangement of her groom's favourite flowers, snowdrops.

A troublesome bridal train

Victoria's bridal train was five and a half metres (18 feet) long and was carried by her 12 bridesmaids. However, it was too short for them all to be able to hold it and walk comfortably. Instead, the girls ended up standing almost on top of one another and had to tiptoe down the aisle.



This famous portrait of Victoria and Albert's marriage, by George Hayter, summed up the wave of romance that surrounded the wedding

"beautiful" and "excessively handsome" while his conversation was "fascinating" and his character "amiable and unaffected."

Victoria and Albert spent hours together every day, riding, walking and talking together and learning about each other's interests. The prince danced endlessly with his cousin and played the piano for her while she sat and listened to his thoughts on art. Just days later, Victoria told Lord Melbourne that she had all but made her mind up to marry Albert but wasn't sure how long to wait. Her prime minister advised a speedy engagement, which brought a new anxiety for Victoria, for, as a queen, it was she who would have to propose.

On 15 October 1839, Queen Victoria requested the presence of her cousin in her Blue Closet. Albert arrived, in a state of nerves, to find Victoria trembling with anxiety. They chatted for a few moments before, as Victoria wrote in her diary, she told him "it would make me too happy if he would consent to what I wished." Albert agreed instantly with Victoria noting "it was the happiest, brightest moment in my life." Now betrothed to one another, the couple spent even more time in each other's company as Albert's visit continued, with Victoria recording in her diary that "we kissed each other again and again".

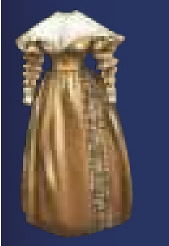
However, their private pleasure was also a public matter and soon the formalities of a royal wedding began. By the time Albert returned home in November 1839, his engagement was the talk of the town, while, within days of his departure, his future wife had made her Declaration of Marriage to the Privy Council. The meeting, at Buckingham Palace on 23 November 1839, had so filled Victoria with dread that her hands were shaking and she almost dropped the paper she was holding, but she made her announcement in a confident and clear voice.

It wasn't all plain sailing, however. The queen's choice wasn't universally popular, with some critics claiming Albert was marrying for money while others said the queen needed an older and wiser husband. Public opinion mattered to the queen, who had already faced attacks over some of her early decisions, and it was Victoria herself who argued against Albert being given a peerage in case it caused dissent.

There was also a fierce debate over whether Albert should take precedence over Victoria's remaining uncles and on the make-up of his new household, while Parliament ended up awarding the prince an allowance of £30,000 a year, much lower than the expected £50,000. Albert, always

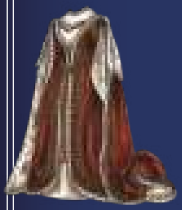
FASHION QUEEN

Victoria wore many stunning dresses during her reign until the death of her beloved Albert



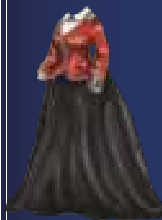
1837
Becoming Queen

Lord Hatherton wrote of this gown, "…dressed in a silk gown with a white muslin collar and a thin black scarf. I never saw her look so well."



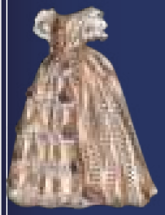
1838
Coronation

Victoria presented a striking regal picture during her coronation, draped in a royal crimson robe with ermine fur and bordered with gold lace.



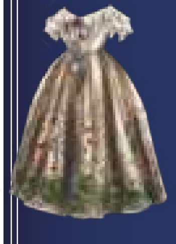
1840
Ceremonial events

Victoria would often wear this riding habit when reviewing troops. Elizabeth II continued this tradition by wearing a similar style for the same purpose.



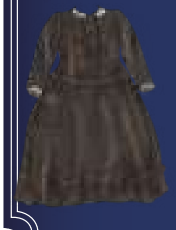
1851
Opening of the Crystal palace

Victoria often wore flounced skirts that widened the bottom silhouette and made the top appear narrower; this shape became a distinctive trend.



1855
State visit to France

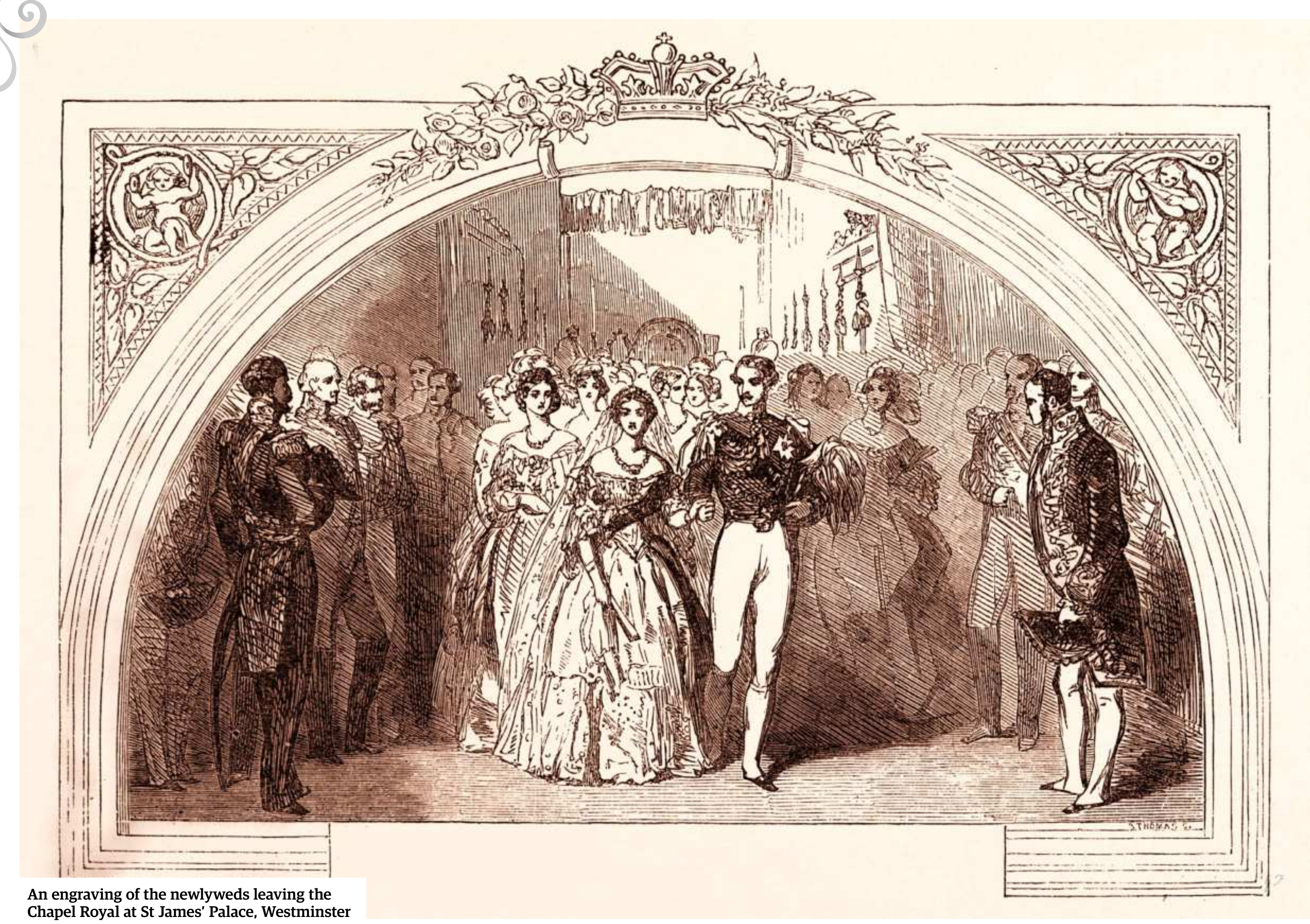
Victoria loved to make a bold impression when meeting foreign dignitaries; she wore this elaborate dress while meeting Napoleon III.



1861
Mourning dress

After Alfred's death, Victoria abandoned her love for fashion and instead donned the iconic black mourning dress for her remaining 40 years.

© Getty Images; Illustration by Julia Lillo; WIKI



An engraving of the newlyweds leaving the Chapel Royal at St James' Palace, Westminster

inclined to introspection, accepted the decision calmly but also expressed concerns about his new role, writing that his future would "not always be unclouded."

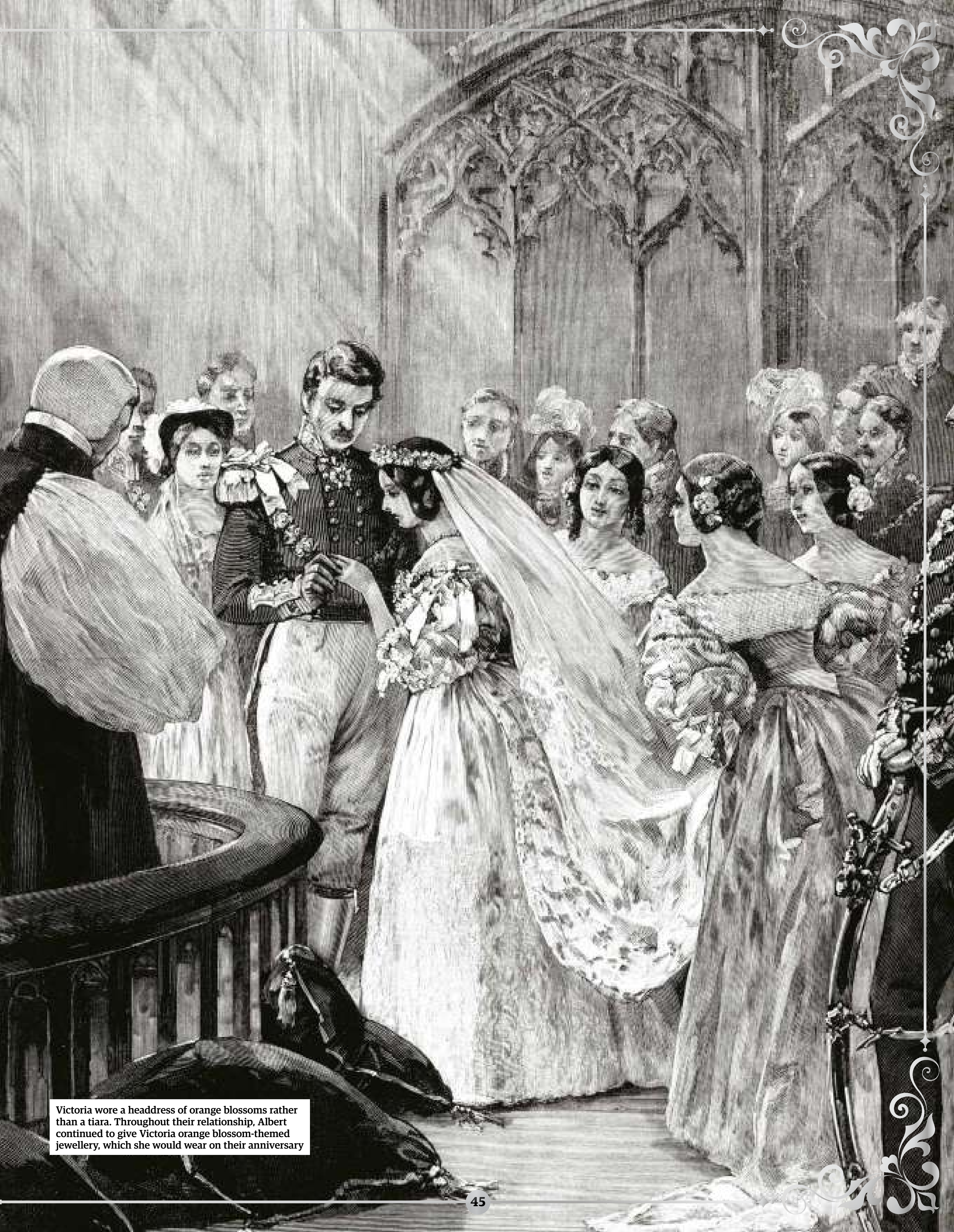
However, he was all smiles when he arrived at Buckingham Palace on 8 February 1840 ahead of his wedding. The young couple threw themselves into the final preparations for their big day, spending the evening before going through the marriage ceremony and even practising trying on the wedding ring. Victoria was determined to see her groom on the morning of their wedding, sending him a sweet note signed "thy ever faithful Victoria R" before one final audience with him ahead of their marriage. Albert was the first to arrive at St. James's Palace for the ceremony, which was set for 1pm. He was dressed in the uniform of a British Field Marshal and wore the star and riband of the Order of the Garter. The bride left Buckingham Palace soon afterwards, accompanied by her mother, the Duchess of Kent, and her Mistress of the Robes, the Duchess of Sutherland, and seemed overcome by the crowds that cheered her. Queen Victoria made the final preparations for her marriage in the Throne Room of St James's Palace, where her 12 bridesmaids, all daughters of peers, arranged her gown and train. The attendants, including Lady Mary Howard and Lady Frances Cowper, were dressed in white just like the bride. The groom entered the chapel first, to Handel's *See, The Conquering Hero Comes*, before the queen's procession arrived with Victoria surrounded by attendants, including Lord Melbourne who was holding the Sword of State. Her uncle, the Duke of Sussex, was at her side to give her away.

More than 300 guests watched Victoria and Albert exchange vows, with the young queen promising to obey her husband. Among the congregation was King Leopold of the Belgians as well as many members of the royal family, including Queen Adelaide, the widow of King William IV. Victoria described the ceremony as "very imposing, and fine and simple" and was almost overcome as she received her wedding ring. Once husband and wife, the couple led the procession back through St. James's Palace before riding through more crowds to Buckingham Palace, where their wedding breakfast was held.

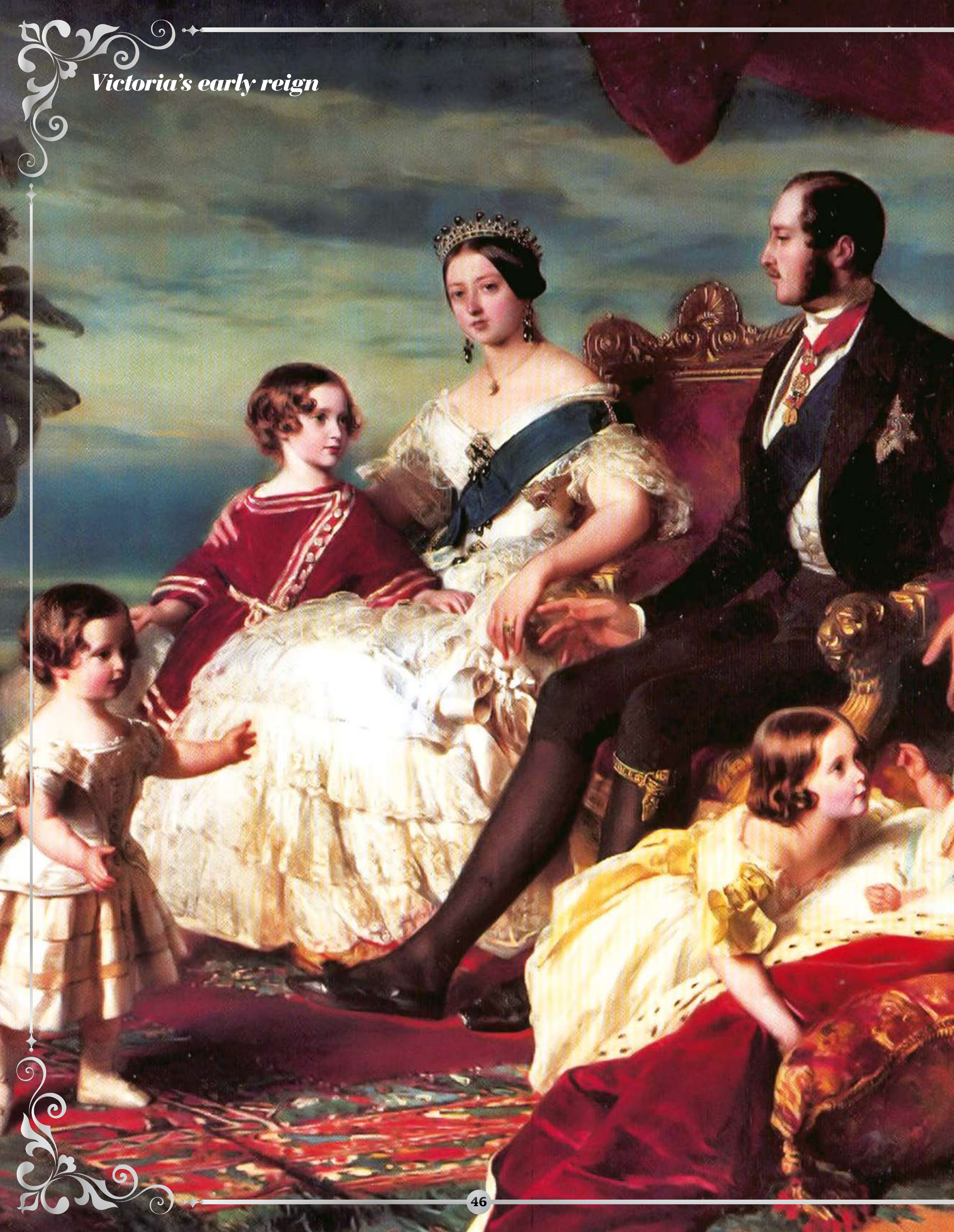
It was a short celebration as, by 4pm, the couple were ready to leave for their honeymoon at Windsor Castle. Victoria was once more overcome by the crowds that turned out to see the newlyweds, who were cheered all the way from London to Berkshire. Writing in her diary the day after her marriage, Victoria confided that "we did not sleep much" before once more heaping praises on the man she called "my precious Angel."

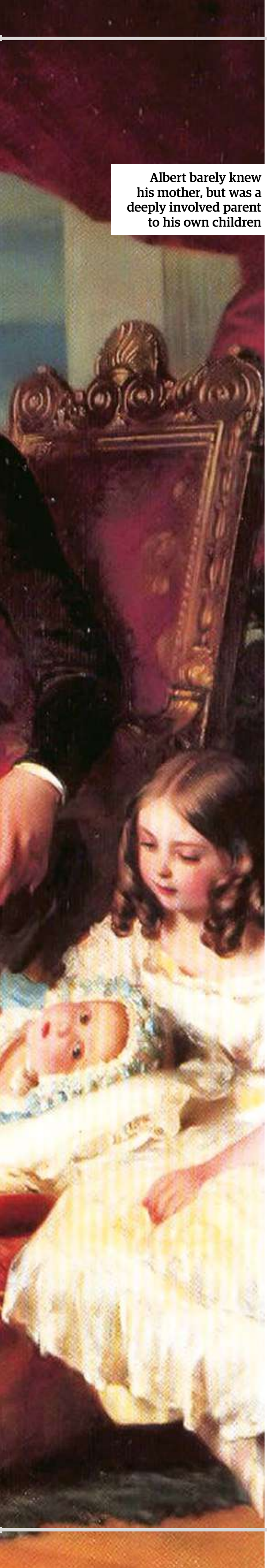
But while deeply in love with Albert, even in the first heady moments of their marriage, Victoria never forgot she was a queen as well as a wife. While the prince had wanted a six-week holiday away from England, Victoria had insisted that three days at Windsor would be enough before she headed back to London to continue her duties as sovereign.

They returned to build a new court, which would slowly see Albert assume more influence and the young cousins turn into a 19th-century power couple. At the heart of Victoria and Albert's success lay their unchanging devotion to one another. They were happily married for more than 20 years and had nine children, among them a son called Leopold in honour of the uncle who had brought them together. The plans for a regal marriage put together so carefully in the 1820s had gone on to produce one of the most celebrated royal love stories of all time.



Victoria wore a headdress of orange blossoms rather than a tiara. Throughout their relationship, Albert continued to give Victoria orange blossom-themed jewellery, which she would wear on their anniversary





Albert barely knew his mother, but was a deeply involved parent to his own children

FAMILY LIFE

Though she was a busy monarch, Queen Victoria still found time to raise a large family, which wasn't without its pressures

Words **Catherine Curzon**

As a monarch, Queen Victoria's reputation as a joyless prude precedes her, but it isn't a reputation that she entirely deserves. Immortalised in the public consciousness as a heartbroken widow, she was also a loving and devoted wife, not to mention the mother of nine children. Like any family, such a large brood didn't come without its challenges and rewards. Despite or perhaps because of being born into immense privilege and influence, some of her children were challenging, to put it mildly.

It's no secret that Queen Victoria and her husband, Prince Albert, enjoyed a passionate and heated relationship. Though their marriage was encouraged by their parents for the sake of building an empire, it was also very definitely a love match. The couple's first child was born in 1840 and their last in 1857 and in their eventual tally of nine, the royal couple were determined to forge useful members of society. Not only that, but they were also determined to be the sort of caring parents that Victoria and Albert had sorely lacked. Victoria had been raised in seclusion, subject to rigid discipline and strict rules, while the marriage of Albert's parents had been tumultuous, eventually ending in divorce. Albert was just five when he last saw his mother and she died seven years later. This wasn't the future he and Victoria envisaged for their own offspring.

Instead they foresaw a happy, stable home that would foster a similarly stable and well-adjusted family who were the living embodiment of their parents' good moral fibre. Beyond that, they believed that their large family would form the foundations of a dynasty that would reach from Great Britain right across Europe, uniting warring powers and solidifying tottering alliances. Unfortunately, their children didn't necessarily share their parents' ambitions.

This idea of a united and happy family is hardly surprising considering not only Albert and Victoria's own childhoods, but also Queen Victoria's predecessors on the British throne. The Georgian kings had run the gamut from dour to extravagant and thanks to the escapades of George IV during his days as Prince Regent, there had once been a genuine fear that the United Kingdom might follow France into revolution. William IV's short reign, which had punctuated that of George IV and Victoria, did much to stabilise the country and the monarchy and Queen Victoria had every intention of continuing what he had started. Just like William, Victoria and Albert knew that George IV's scandalous love life and big-spending, debt-ridden ways had led the country to the brink of disaster. Victoria and Albert were determined to show that they weren't rarefied royals, living high on the public purse, but nothing more remarkable than a perfectly respectable middle-class family.

Victoria outlived three of her nine children: Alice died in 1878, Leopold in 1884 and Alfred in 1900

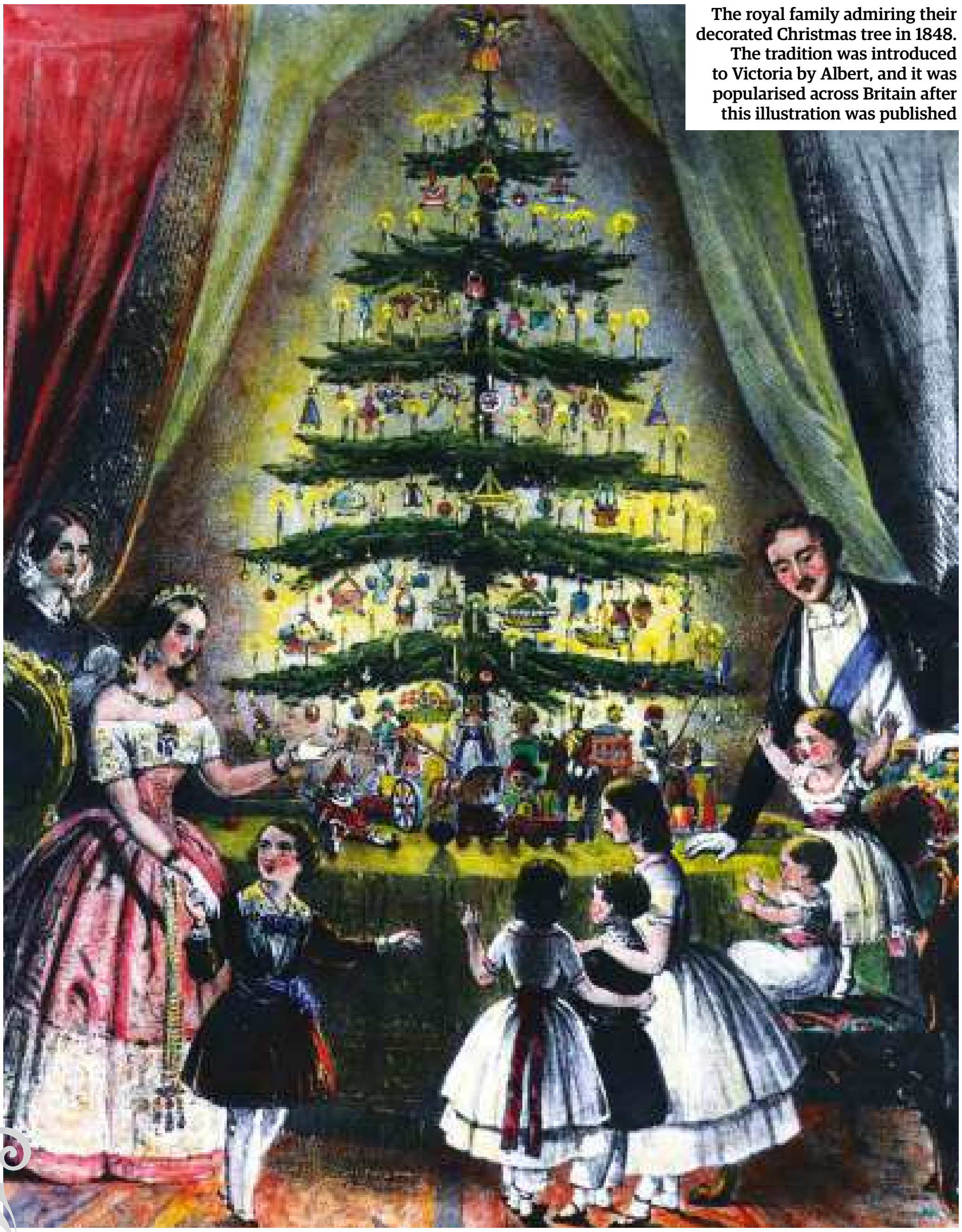
Yet the royal family were far from an unremarkable middle-class household and in reaching for something resembling unremarkable normality, tensions eventually began to develop. The very thing that had inspired Victoria and Albert to strive for a happy family meant that they struggled to achieve it. Neither of them knew what a happy domestic scene looked like, because neither of them had ever experienced one. Instead, they had to try and find out together by a process of unforgiving trial and error. None of this was helped by Victoria's resentment at the fact that childbearing would inevitably take her away from her royal duties and throughout all her pregnancies, she continued to work as much as she possibly could.

The couple's first child, Vicky, was born within the first year of their passionate marriage and came at a time when Victoria's attention was on something other than motherhood. She was fully occupied with her royal duties and saw Vicky only twice a day, preferring to leave her care to trusted royal nurses. Though happy to have safely delivered her first child, Victoria was disappointed to be presented with a daughter. She had hoped for a male heir, keen to get on with building her dynasty. Still, she certainly did love her daughter and delighted in bathing her and putting her to bed, routines that she was less able to continue as the years passed and the number of her children grew.

The much desired heir came along the following year. The birth of Albert Edward, known by the family as Bertie, was a huge relief to the queen. Robust and healthy, Bertie's birth more or less guaranteed her line of succession and meant that her majesty could reasonably take a break from the dangerous business of giving birth, should she so wish. Instead she and Albert welcomed three more children over the next five years, naming them Alice, Alfred - the all-important spare to go with the heir - and Helena.

Yet Victoria was far from the most adoring mother to her newborns and eventually, she had so many children and so much work to do as queen that she saw her children only every few weeks. Not only was she too busy to be a full-time mum, but she hated the physical changes that came with pregnancy and thought babies - even her own - were revoltingly ugly. Even worse for the busy queen, after the birth of each child she suffered alarming symptoms such as low moods and constant weeping, suggesting that she was prone to bouts of post-natal depression.

To Victoria, children were a necessary part of building a dynasty, but not one that she was particularly sentimental about. As was common among royal households, she delegated the matter of breastfeeding to a wet nurse, repelled by the idea of doing such a thing herself. When she learned later that her daughters had breastfed their own children, Victoria was utterly horrified that they would make such a choice. As her children were passed into the care of their nurses, Victoria focussed all her attentions on her beloved Albert. And what attentions they were, resulting in the birth of Louise, Arthur, Leopold and Beatrice over the next few years. To give birth to so many healthy babies was quite a feat when one considers the dangers of pregnancy in the Victorian era.

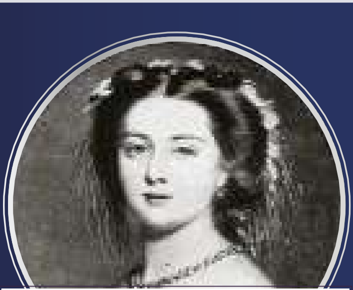

The royal family admiring their decorated Christmas tree in 1848. The tradition was introduced to Victoria by Albert, and it was popularised across Britain after this illustration was published

Albert and Victoria did all they could to publicise their happy family and Albert orchestrated a PR push intended to promote this relatable, middle-class royal family. The couple posed with their children in widely-circulated photographs, supplying the template for the model royal household in which unity and morality were the watchwords. In fact, it was Albert who took responsibility for the children as Victoria concentrated on her public duties. Having barely known his mother and been ignored by his philandering father, Albert couldn't have been more different to his own parents. He was an involved and engaged father who delighted in the gentle company of his children and they loved him in turn. He knew full well that he had much to learn about fatherhood and he knew that his children could teach him some of what he needed to know, so was enchanted and delighted by watching their growth from newborns into children.

Yet Albert did bring some of his own childhood experience to bear, namely the education system that he had been subjected to. His strict and disciplined education had made him into a well-rounded and intelligent man and he believed that he could do the same for his own children, whether they enjoyed it or not. With no room for intellectual weakness, Albert established an education system alongside Baron Stockmar in which achievement was all and his sons were educated seven days a week for seven hours a day. Underpinning the system was the constant threat of corporal punishment, with Albert and Victoria sharing a belief that discipline and unquestioning obedience was a vital and fundamental element in the education of a child.

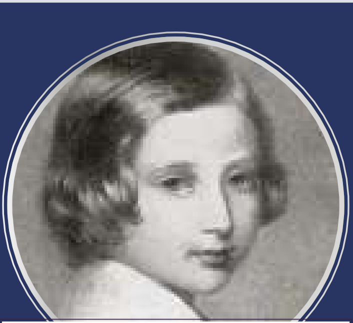
The children were subject to levels of discipline that would raise eyebrows by modern standards, including beatings and thrashed fingers should they miss a note when playing the piano. Unfortunately, Albert's intellectual ambition for his children far outstripped what they were capable of and some of the young princes and princesses struggled with their hours of lessons, from multiple languages to sciences, classics and more. Matters weren't helped by the fact that Vicky, the couple's eldest child, was exceptionally intelligent, and her younger siblings were expected to be able to keep up with her. Given that she was speaking French by the time she was two years old, it was an impossibility for Bertie, the heir to the throne.

THE ROYAL CHILDREN



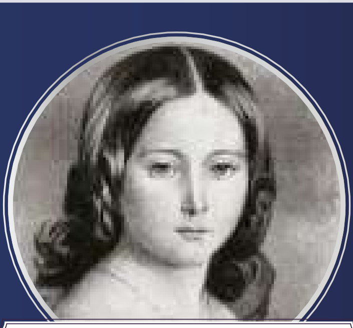
VICTORIA ADELAIDE MARY LOUISA
Born: 1840

The highly intelligent Victoria, Princess Royal, was the couple's eldest child. She married Prince Frederick of Prussia but was unwelcome at her marital court thanks to her push towards a constitutional monarchy. Victoria was briefly German Empress and Queen of Prussia, and was mother to Kaiser Wilhelm II.



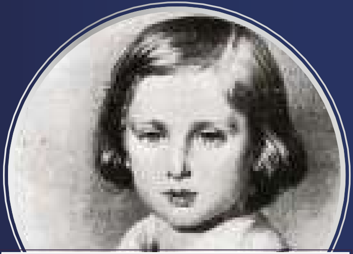
ALBERT EDWARD
Born: 1841

Better known as Bertie, the future Edward VII had an extremely troubled relationship with his parents. As fun loving as Victoria was dour and Albert respectable, during his nine years on the throne he enjoyed huge public popularity despite racking up a series of personal scandals.



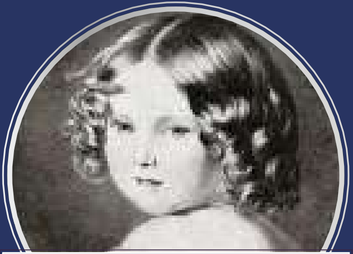
ALICE MAUD MARY
Born: 1843

After she nursed her dying father, Alice became her mother's unofficial secretary until her marriage to Louis IV, Grand Duke of Hesse. She was deeply unhappy in her marriage but found fulfilment when she developed an interest in nursing and philanthropy during the Austro-Prussian War. Her daughter married Tsar Nicholas II.



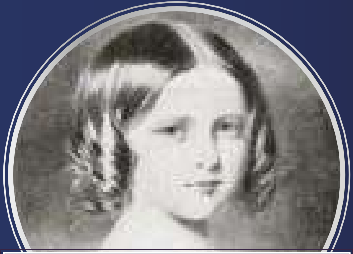
ALFRED ERNEST ALBERT
Born: 1844

Alfred enjoyed a naval career and was almost crowned King of Greece, before his mother and Parliament stepped in to block the move. He travelled the world and even survived an assassination attempt, but was popular amongst the public thanks to his unwavering dedication to his naval duty.



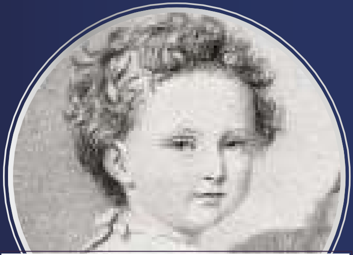
HELENA AUGUSTA VICTORIA
Born: 1846

After a budding romance with her father's librarian, Carl Ruland, ended when Victoria dismissed him, Helena married Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein. The couple remained in England where Helena enjoyed a packed diary, including becoming one of the founders of the British Red Cross.



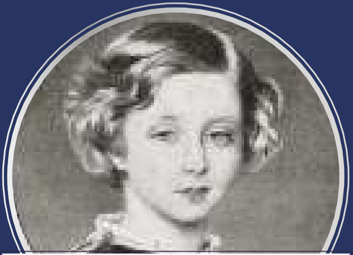
LOUISA 'LOUISE' CAROLINE ALBERTA
Born: 1848

Louise was frustrated by Victoria's prolonged mourning and threw herself into her hobbies, becoming a highly proficient sculptor. She involved herself in feminist causes and married John Campbell, 9th Duke of Argyll. He became Governor General of Canada and the couple enjoyed a glittering social life.



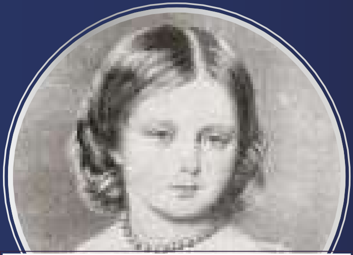
ARTHUR WILLIAM PATRICK ALBERT
Born: 1850

Prince Arthur joined the British Army at the age of 18 and pursued his career for four decades. He was the only prince to serve as Governor General of Canada and was a familiar sight all over the world thanks to his dedication to his royal and military duties alike.



LEOPOLD GEORGE DUNCAN ALBERT
Born: 1853

Leopold was the youngest son of Victoria and Albert. His military ambitions were thwarted by his haemophilia and Victoria did all she could to keep him at home, but he was determined to marry. Two years after his wedding to Helena of Waldeck and Pyrmont he died, aged just 30.

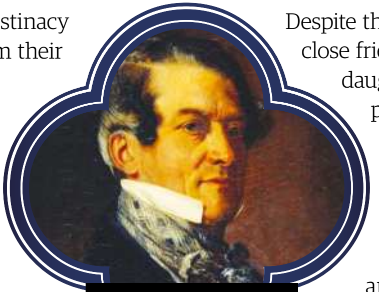


BEATRICE MARY VICTORIA FEODORE
Born: 1857

As Victoria's favourite daughter, Beatrice was kept sheltered in the hope that she would never want to marry. In fact, she ended up doing just that - but Victoria agreed to give her consent only if Beatrice and her husband, Prince Henry of Battenberg, agreed that they would live in England.

Busy being the queen, Victoria was more than happy to leave matters of education to Albert and she supported his initiatives without question. She particularly hoped that Bertie, free-spirited, flighty and garrulous, could be morphed into the image of his father. In fact, he couldn't have been more different. He kicked against Albert and Baron Stockmar's systems and discipline with tantrums and noisy resistance, the unswerving lessons serving only to distress the young prince. There was no room for the children to learn at their own pace, nor any opportunity for them to learn by any other method than rote and corporal punishment, and Bertie suited neither. Victoria and Albert were dismayed by his behaviour and believed that the Prince of Wales was verging on educationally subnormal. Even when the other children struggled, Victoria and Albert refused to bend their system and Albert concluded that they must have inherited their obstinacy and lack of intellectual ability from their mother's side. God forbid it had come from him.

Despite – or perhaps because of – their ceaseless devotion to one another, Albert and Victoria's relationship was not without its stresses. With Albert's attention increasingly taken by his duties to his children, Victoria grew envious and jealous and the couple began to argue. He believed she didn't appreciate his efforts and began to suffer with nervous illnesses, which were only exacerbated by the arguments at home.

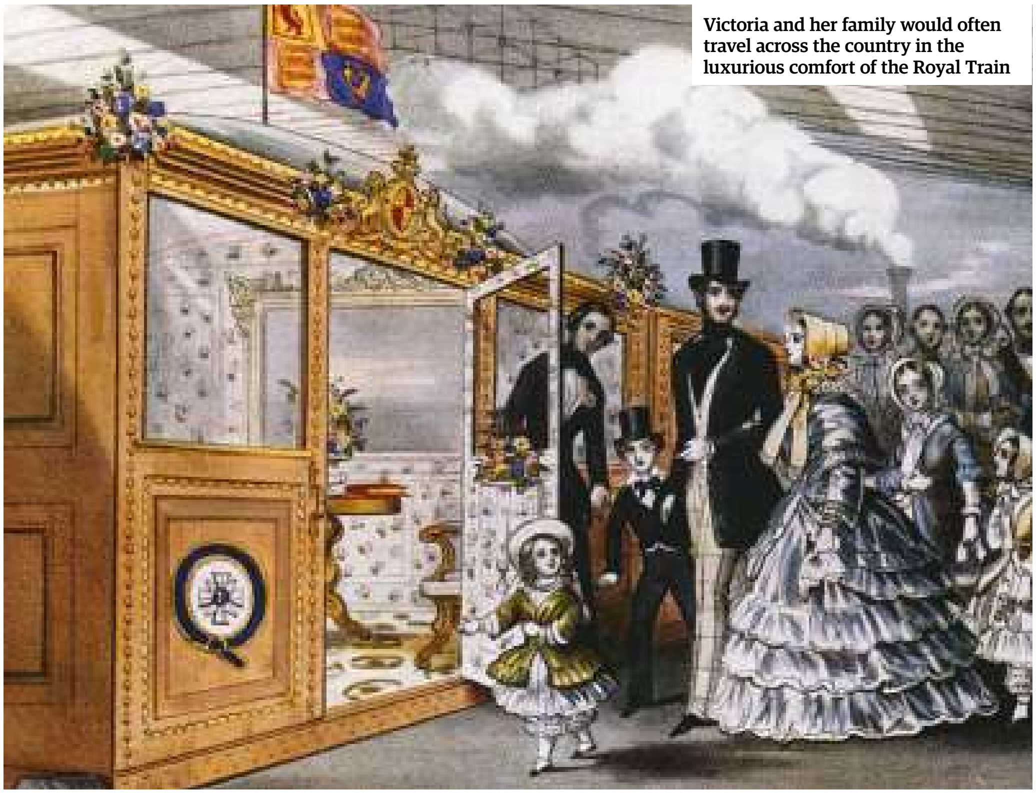

Baron Stockmar played a decisive role in the education of the royal children

Despite these jealousies, Victoria remained close friends with Vicky, her oldest daughter, over the years and the pair exchanged letters constantly following Vicky's marriage. As the children grew, their parents put the next phase of their plan into action and began to marry them off. Though Victoria and Albert had a love match, they knew that this wouldn't necessarily be the case for their children. The couple were bitterly sad to see 17-year-

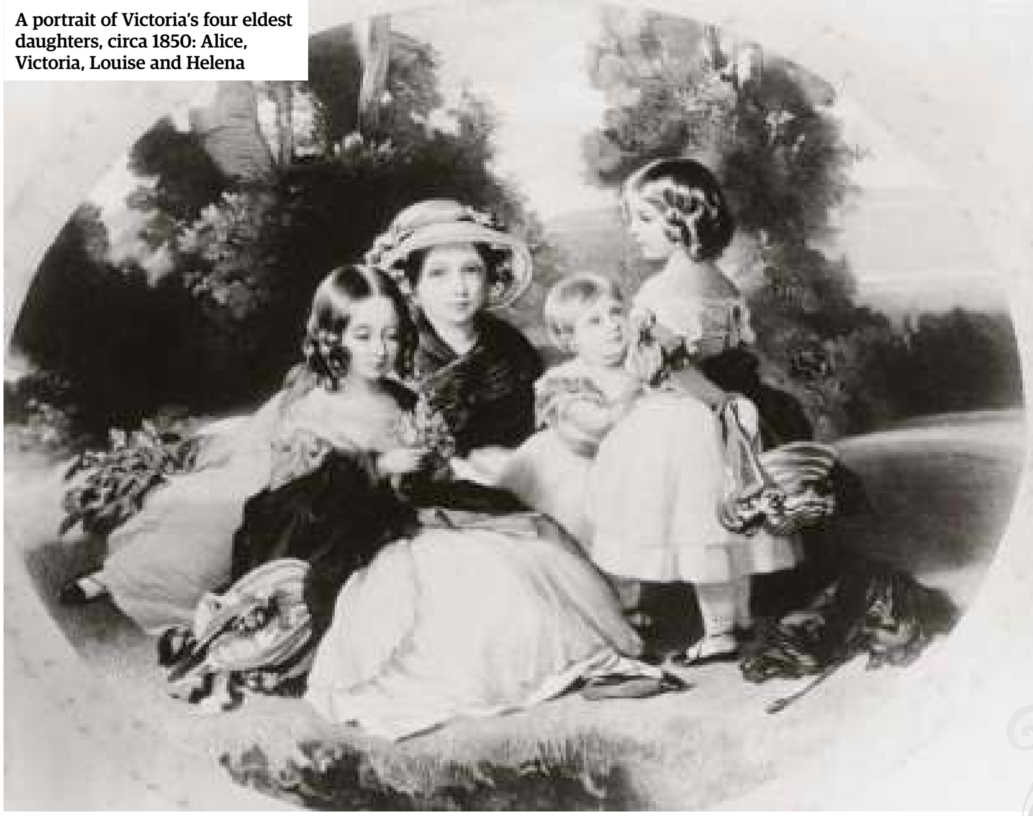
All of Victoria and Albert's nine children survived to adulthood, a rather rare occurrence at the time

old Vicky begin a new life as the wife of Frederick of Prussia but in there was no room for sentiment - they had planned a dynasty, and a dynasty they must have. Yet the royal children wouldn't play the game and as Bertie began to raise hell, the couple saw their efforts failing in a horribly public fashion. When Albert died after heading out in the rain to rebuke the Prince of Wales, Victoria blamed her son for his death. Victoria had no time or stomach to continue the domestic programme over which he had presided, too wrapped up in her own grief. Though she loved her children, relations with them were not always rosy. Yet Bertie, perhaps surprisingly, made good eventually. As Edward VII he became one of the most well-loved kings the country had ever known.

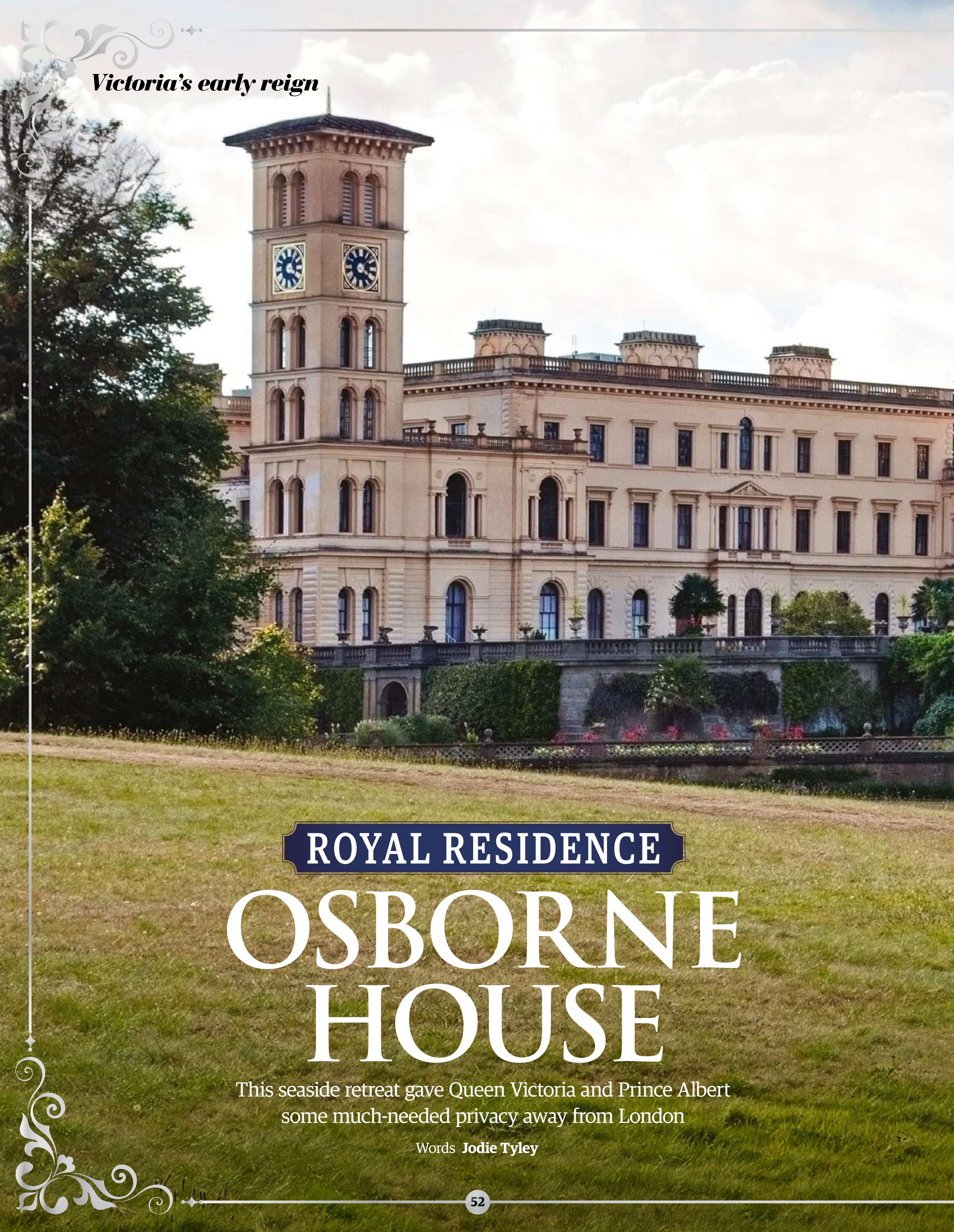
> "With Albert's attention increasingly taken by his duties to his children, Victoria grew envious and jealous and the couple began to argue"



Victoria and her family would often travel across the country in the luxurious comfort of the Royal Train



A portrait of Victoria's four eldest daughters, circa 1850: Alice, Victoria, Louise and Helena



ROYAL RESIDENCE

OSBORNE HOUSE

This seaside retreat gave Queen Victoria and Prince Albert some much-needed privacy away from London

Words **Jodie Tyley**

© Alamy

TIMELINE

1705

The original Osborne
The estate comes into the possession of the Blachford family who extend the existing house into a three-storey home with a stable block and walled garden.

1845

Private quarters are built
The first building to be completed is the three-storey Pavilion block, which houses the private rooms of Victoria and Albert as well as the royal nurseries.

1848

Demolition begins
Architect Thomas Cubitt suggests that the Georgian house is torn down and a palatial estate is erected in its place. Work on the household wing, for members of the royal household, is also completed this year.

1853-54

A playhouse fit for a prince
A timber Swiss Cottage is built for the royal children to play in and gain an education. They are taught to cook and grow vegetables in the garden.

1862

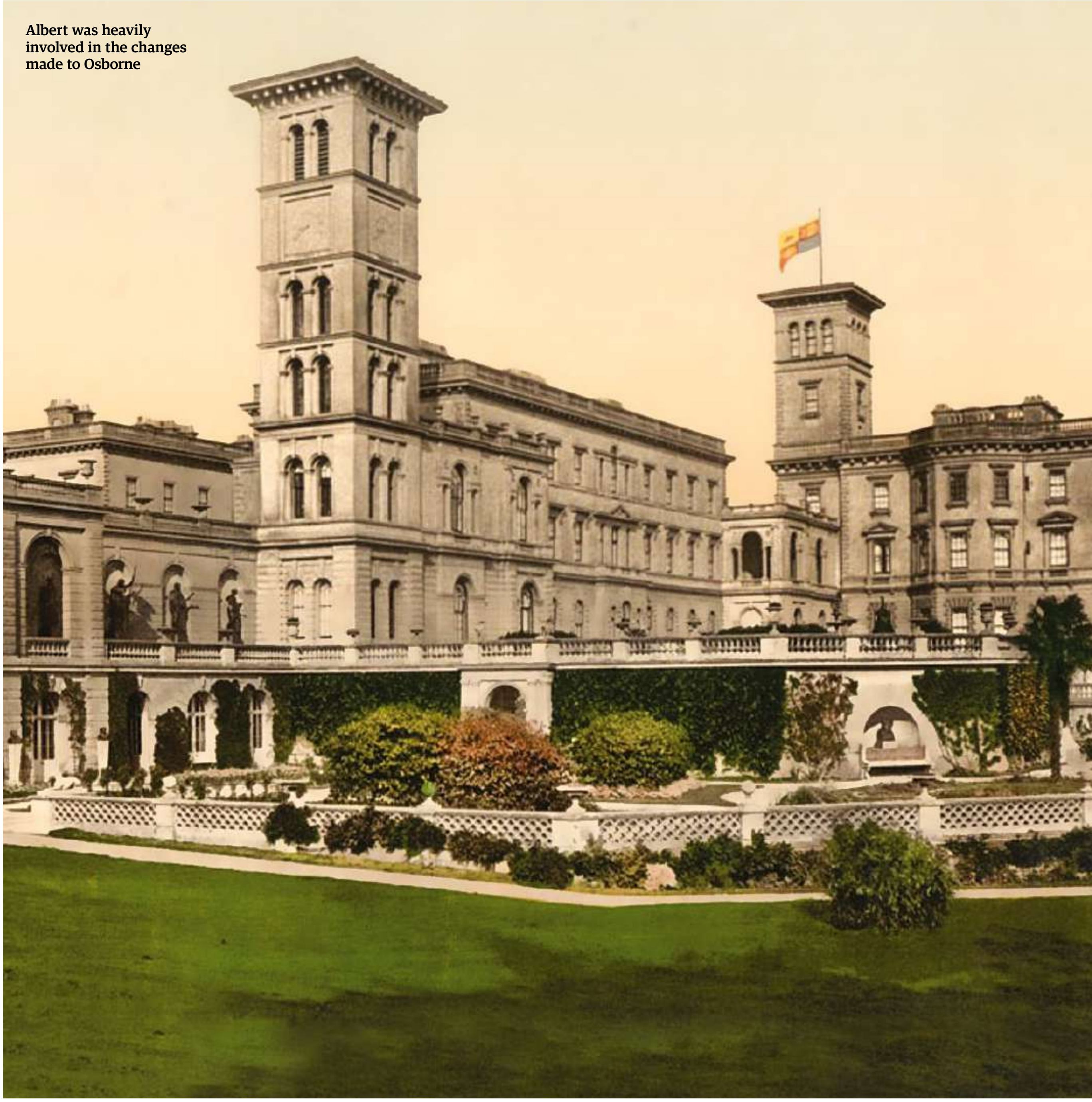
Life after Albert
Following Albert's death in 1861, only minor changes are made to Osborne House. A museum is added to house artefacts that the children have collected from foreign tours, and in 1880, a private chapel is built for the queen.

1890-92

Enter the Durbar Wing
On the ground floor, a grand Indian-themed reception room is built for official functions, while the first floor houses a private suite for the queen's youngest daughter, Princess Beatrice, and her family.

1902

Osborne is gifted to the nation
On Edward VII's coronation day, he gives the estate to the nation, but seals Victoria and Albert's rooms. In 1954, Queen Elizabeth II grants permission for the rooms to be unlocked and they are opened to the public.


Albert was heavily involved in the changes made to Osborne

"It's impossible to imagine a prettier spot," said Queen Victoria of her island hideaway, Osborne House, on the Isle of Wight. She had been married to Prince Albert for five years and already had four children when they began to look for a holiday home. The queen wanted to give her ever-expanding family a chance to escape court life and be themselves in the privacy and luxury of a grand estate.

Originally a Georgian mansion with 16 rooms, Victoria and Albert bought Osborne House for just under £25,000 in 1845. However, it was far too small to house the royal family and their staff, so Albert threw himself into designing a new abode. "It does one's heart good to see how my beloved Albert enjoys it all," Victoria wrote. "He is hardly to be kept at home a moment." By the time their holiday escape was complete, they had spent a pricey £200,000 (roughly £2.9 million / $3.8 million today).

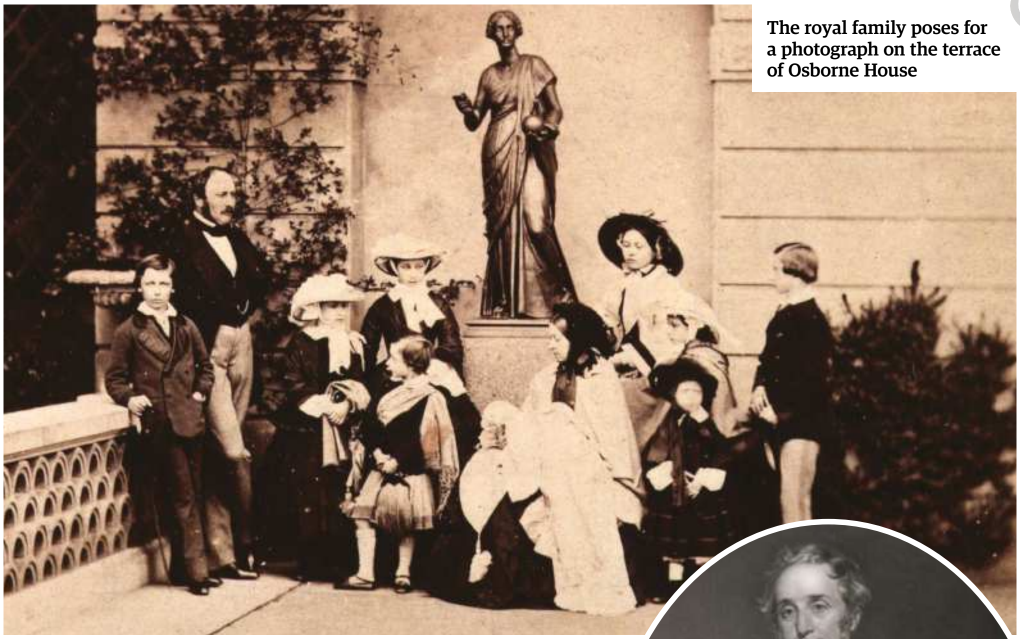
The result epitomised Victoria and Albert's tastes in art, décor and architecture; the mix between comfort and opulence reflected her dual role as monarch and mother. During the summer months, the family would enjoy picnics, boating and bathing on their private beach, which still houses Victoria's bathing machine where she disrobed. Naturally, whenever the royals were in residence, Cowes became the number one tourist attraction (although the queen had hoped the trip to the island would deter visitors).

Albert was a great advocate for invention and he incorporated the latest technology into their home, including underfloor heating in his private bathroom. The house is filled with sentimental gifts and portraits the couple gave to one another. To walk through its rooms is to peek into the personal lives of this royal family that lived more than 100 years ago.

ITALY OR THE ISLE OF WIGHT?

How the rural retreat came to resemble an Italianate villa

"The sea was so blue and calm that the Prince said it was like Naples," Queen Victoria wrote in her diary. The Solent had struck a chord with Albert, reminding him of his experience as a student in Italy, so he set about transforming the original three-storey Georgian mansion into a splendid Italian Renaissance palazzo. Technically, the Department of Woods and Forests should have been responsible for designing their holiday home as they were in charge of all government architecture. Not wanting them to restrict his vision, however, Albert employed the architect Thomas Cubitt instead. Cubitt came up with a design that encompassed the flat-roofed Italianate style, with a tall flag tower, a clock tower and colonades. He also ensured that the royal family's rooms in the Pavilion were hidden from view. Once the building was complete, villas started being built all over the island.

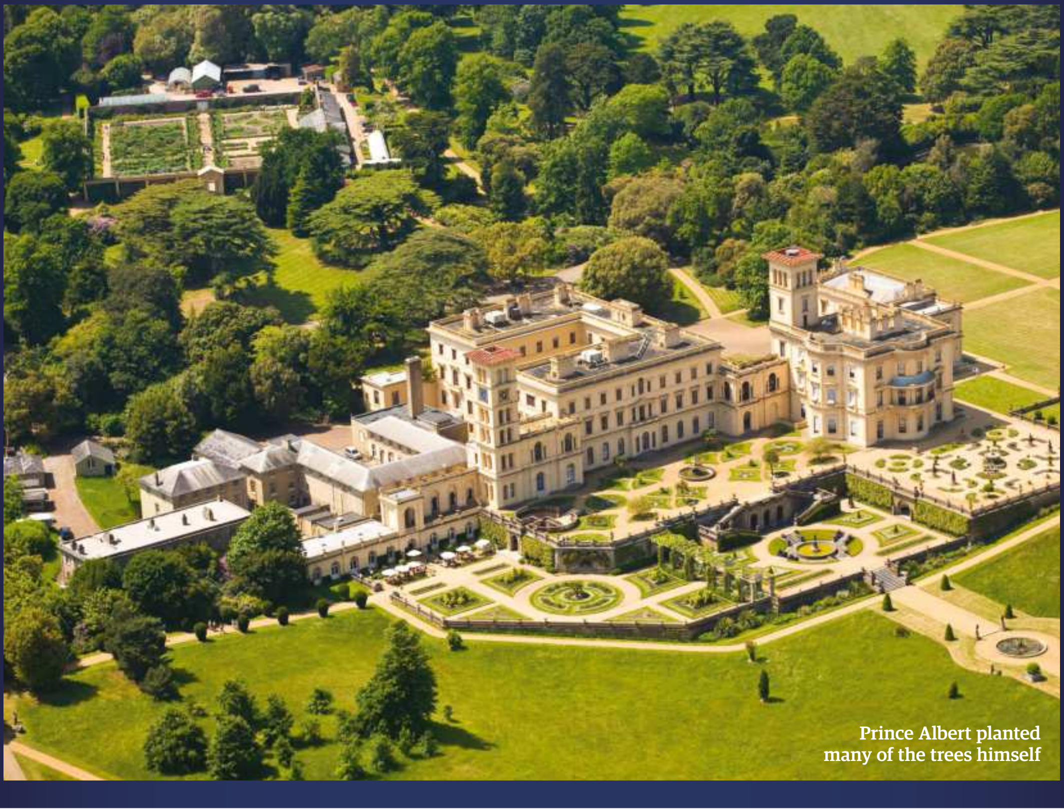


The royal family poses for a photograph on the terrace of Osborne House

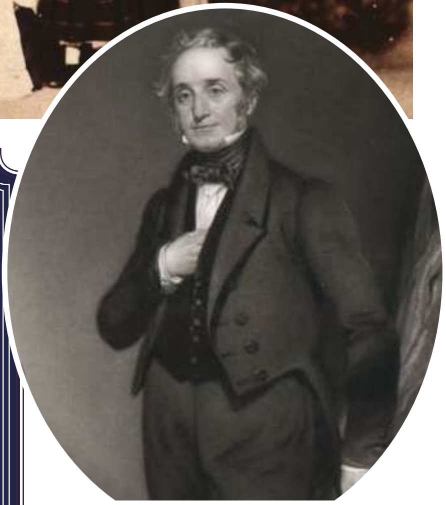
THE GREEN-FINGERED PRINCE

Albert was involved in every aspect of the estate

With more than 800 hectares (nearly 2,000 acres), Osborne was an enormous passion project for the Prince Consort. He was involved in every decision, indulging his interests in architecture, agriculture and forestry. In keeping with the palatial home, the gardens were designed in the Italianate style. Evergreens lined the drives and walkways, and the upper and lower terraces were all adorned with symmetrical parterres, statues and a large fountain. Albert was also influenced by his family home of Rosenau and planted poplars throughout the grounds. He was happy to get his hands dirty too, often planting the trees himself. In 1847, Victoria wrote in her diary: "We walked out with the children, and they helped, or at least thought they did, in planting some trees." She also wrote of the rich variety of bedding plants used, and how the summer evenings were scented with orange blossom and roses.



Prince Albert planted many of the trees himself



LONDON'S LEGENDARY MASTER BUILDER

Meet the man who made Albert's dream a reality

It's hard to imagine, yet London's wealthy SW1 postcode area was once a wasteland of swamp and criminal activity. Looking to develop the area we now know as Belgravia, Earl Grosvenor enlisted the help of Thomas Cubitt – a former ship's carpenter turned self-made businessman who was rapidly gaining a reputation in London for his efficiency and excellence. His centrepiece for the new development was to be Belgrave Square, and the white terraced houses would become some of the most exclusive in London. Queen Victoria approved, renting number 36 for her mother, the Duchess of Kent.

After collaborating with Prince Albert on Osborne House, Cubitt was commissioned to design the eastern façade of Buckingham Palace and remodel Marble Arch. To acknowledge his work, Victoria offered him a title, but being a modest man, he politely refused.

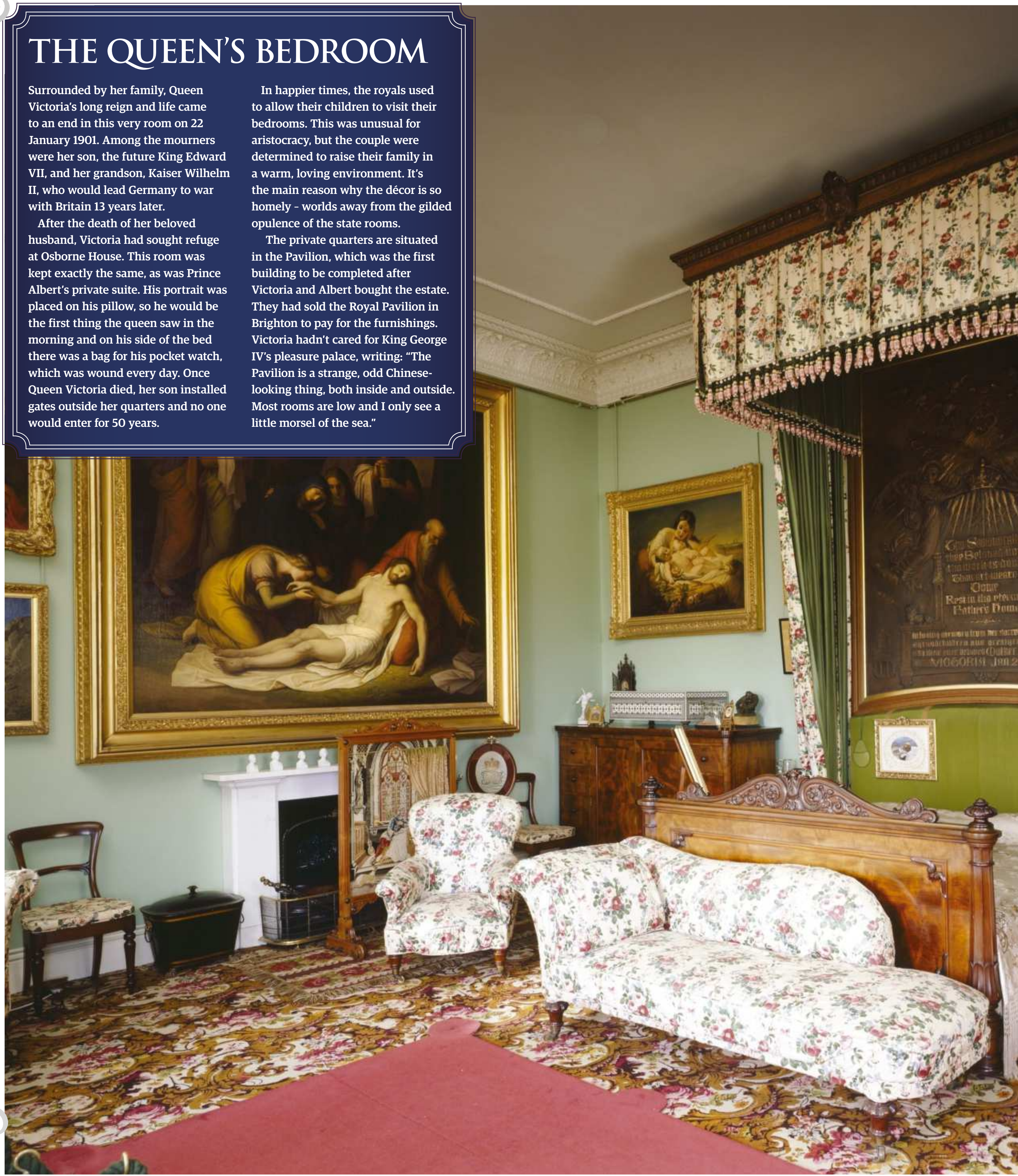
THE QUEEN'S BEDROOM

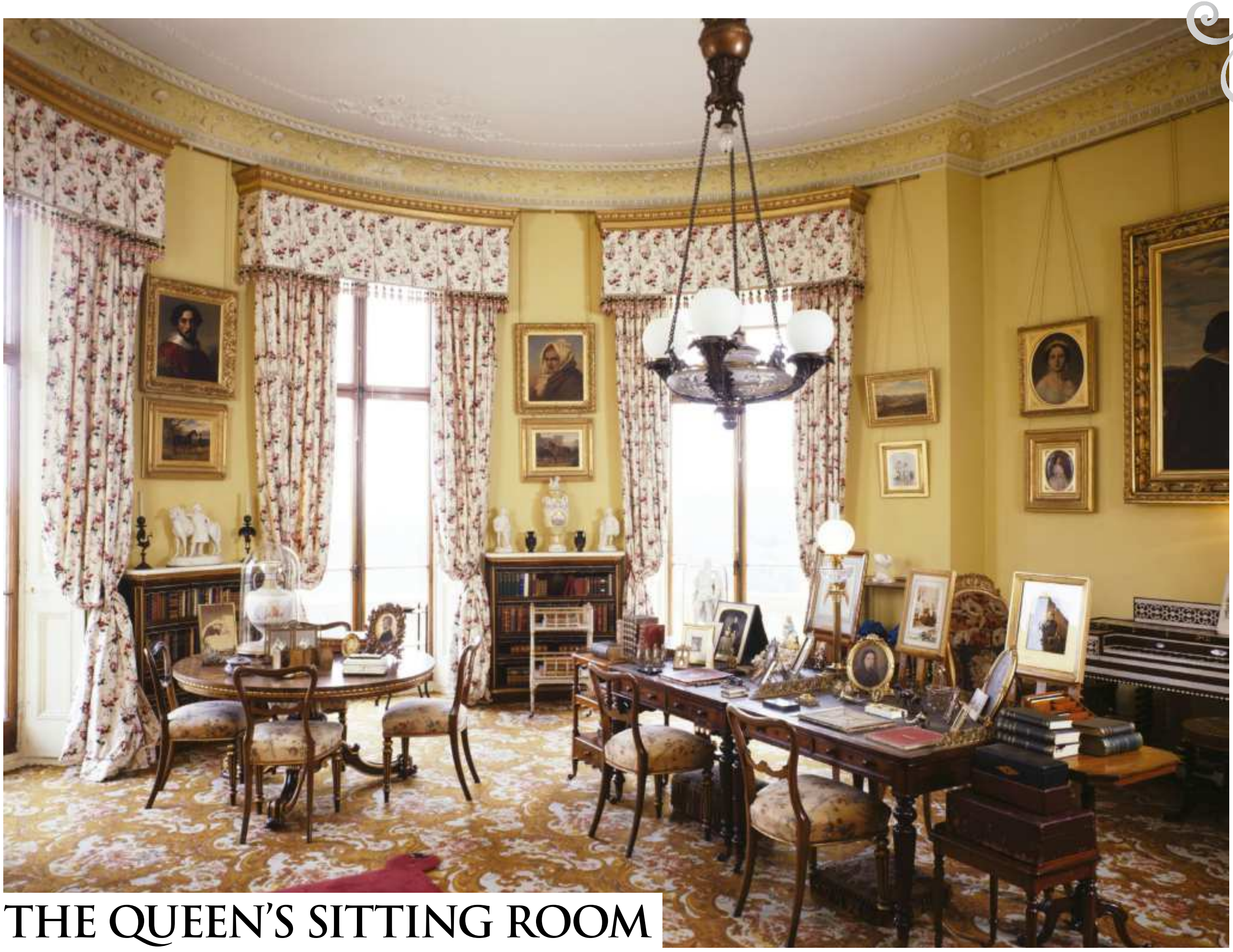
Surrounded by her family, Queen Victoria's long reign and life came to an end in this very room on 22 January 1901. Among the mourners were her son, the future King Edward VII, and her grandson, Kaiser Wilhelm II, who would lead Germany to war with Britain 13 years later.

After the death of her beloved husband, Victoria had sought refuge at Osborne House. This room was kept exactly the same, as was Prince Albert's private suite. His portrait was placed on his pillow, so he would be the first thing the queen saw in the morning and on his side of the bed there was a bag for his pocket watch, which was wound every day. Once Queen Victoria died, her son installed gates outside her quarters and no one would enter for 50 years.

In happier times, the royals used to allow their children to visit their bedrooms. This was unusual for aristocracy, but the couple were determined to raise their family in a warm, loving environment. It's the main reason why the décor is so homely – worlds away from the gilded opulence of the state rooms.

The private quarters are situated in the Pavilion, which was the first building to be completed after Victoria and Albert bought the estate. They had sold the Royal Pavilion in Brighton to pay for the furnishings. Victoria hadn't cared for King George IV's pleasure palace, writing: "The Pavilion is a strange, odd Chinese-looking thing, both inside and outside. Most rooms are low and I only see a little morsel of the sea."

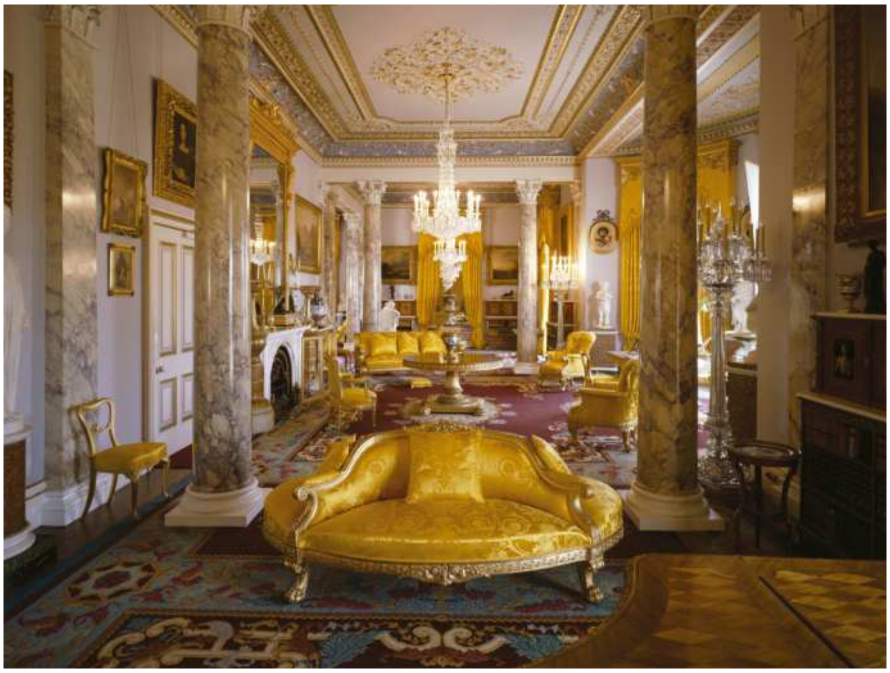




THE QUEEN'S SITTING ROOM

While the queen's closest companions, her dogs, chased one another around the room, she would often work side-by-side with her husband on mahogany writing desks. Every surface was filled with framed photographs, bronzes and miniatures, showcasing the couple's love for art. One of the most talked about pieces was Winterhalter's Florinda, a painting of beautiful nude maidens, which the queen commissioned for Albert's birthday in 1852.

With yellow silk walls, floral carpet and chintz chairs typical of the Victorian era, the sitting room was a comfortable, informal room. The large windows were usually left open and the room was freezing most of the time, but the queen had been told about the benefits of fresh sea air and hated using the heating. In the evening, Victoria and Albert enjoyed sitting on the small balcony where they would listen to the nightingales singing.

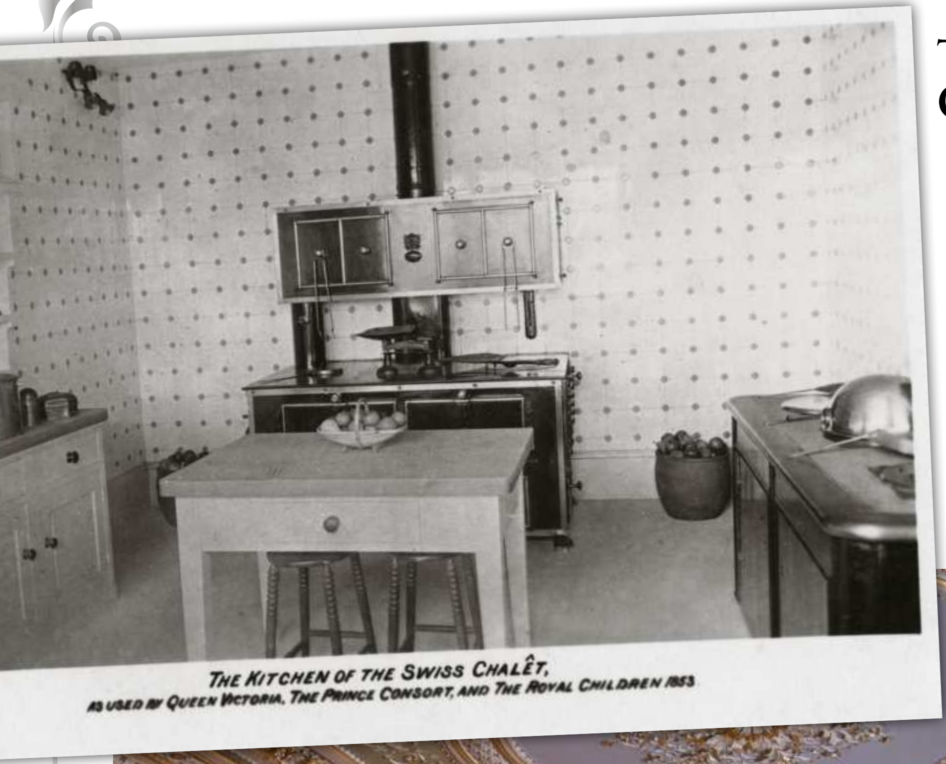


THE DRAWING ROOM

Prime Minister Lord Rosebery used to say the drawing room at Osborne was the ugliest he had ever seen - until he saw the one at Balmoral. Evidently, the vivid yellow satin curtains and cut-glass chandeliers were not to his taste.

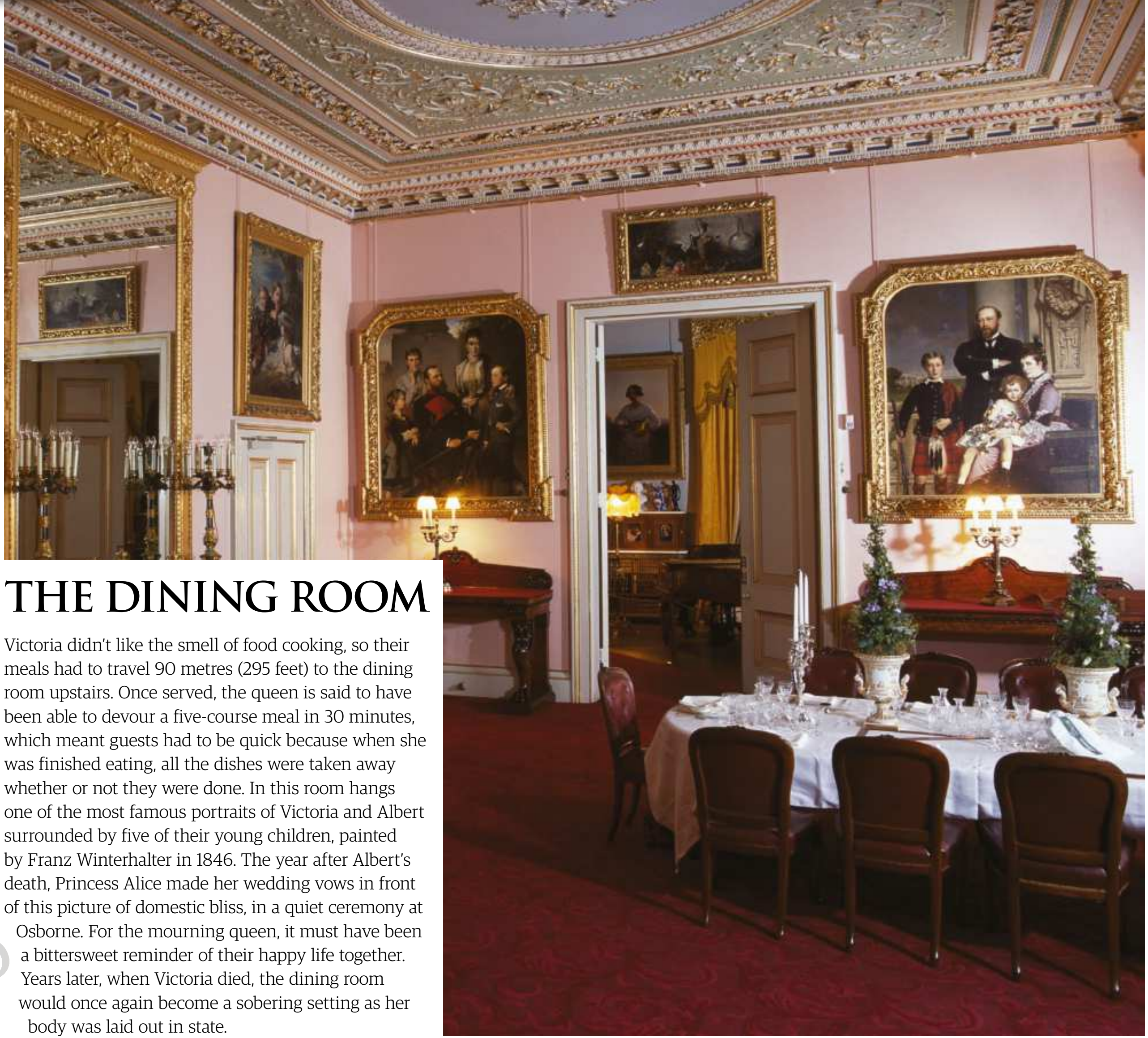
The room occupied the entire width of the Pavilion, overlooking the Solent, and it was often where the queen retired after dinner. The family would play cards and sing around the piano. As the principal room, it was also where visiting foreign royalty were received.

A columned screen and a pair of curtains separate the drawing room from the billiard room. This was where the men retired, but the queen also enjoyed a game. Albert designed the billiard table to be higher, so that ladies could play without bending over in an inappropriate way.


The Kitchen of the Swiss Chalêt,
as used by Queen Victoria, The Prince Consort, and The Royal Children 1853

THE SWISS COTTAGE KITCHEN

Albert had progressive ideas about the children's education and designed a miniature house, the Swiss Cottage, for them to learn about life outside the palace. It was modelled on an Alpine vernacular building to reflect his hometown in Germany, and was fitted with a fully functioning kitchen and child-sized furnishings. On the walls were German proverbs – the language the couple would regularly converse in. It was in this extravagant playhouse that the nine children learned to cook with vegetables they had grown in their own garden. Each child had their own plot of land and they would sell any produce they had grown to their father for the going rate, teaching them about economics and trade.



THE DINING ROOM

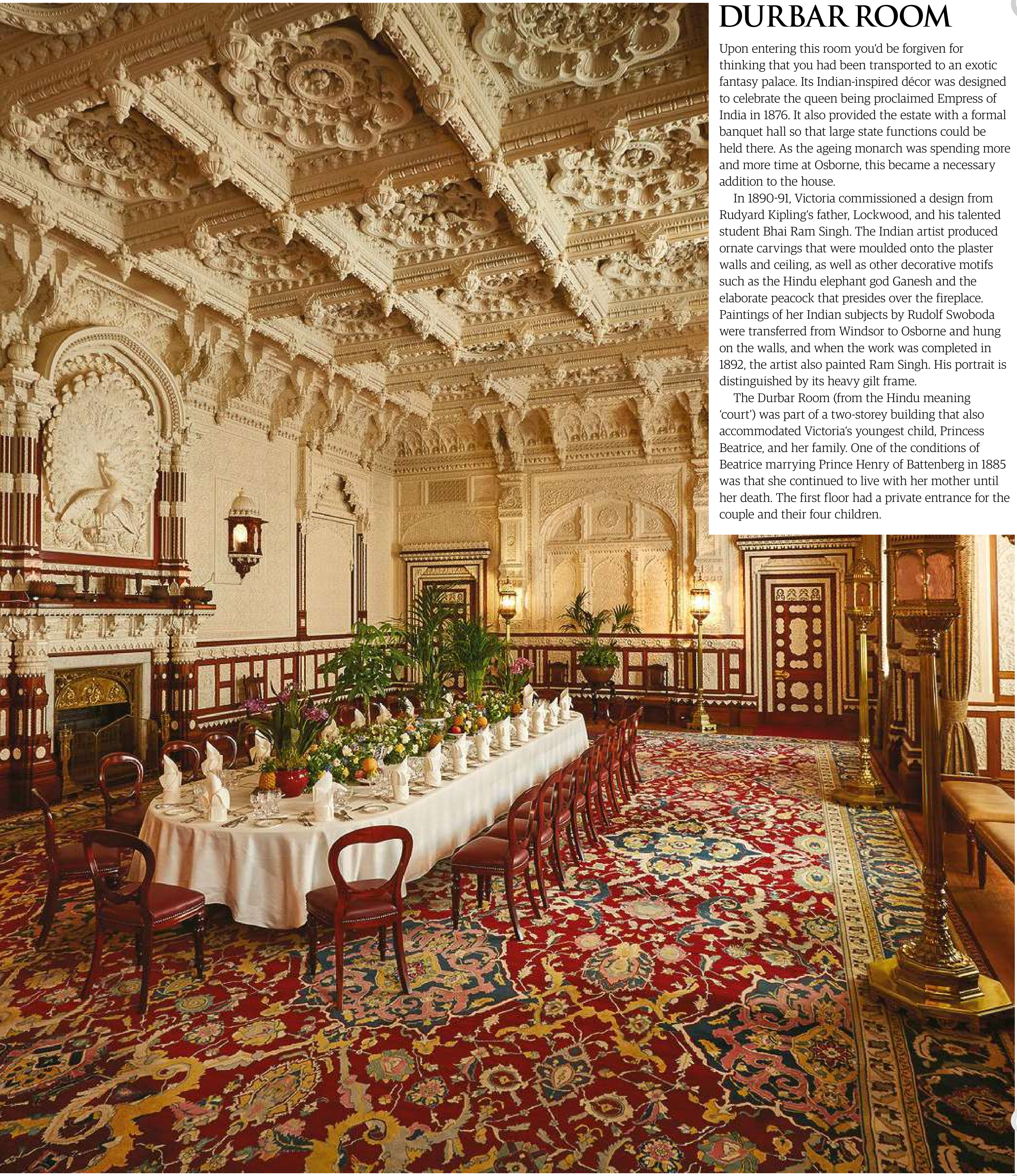
Victoria didn't like the smell of food cooking, so their meals had to travel 90 metres (295 feet) to the dining room upstairs. Once served, the queen is said to have been able to devour a five-course meal in 30 minutes, which meant guests had to be quick because when she was finished eating, all the dishes were taken away whether or not they were done. In this room hangs one of the most famous portraits of Victoria and Albert surrounded by five of their young children, painted by Franz Winterhalter in 1846. The year after Albert's death, Princess Alice made her wedding vows in front of this picture of domestic bliss, in a quiet ceremony at Osborne. For the mourning queen, it must have been a bittersweet reminder of their happy life together. Years later, when Victoria died, the dining room would once again become a sobering setting as her body was laid out in state.

DURBAR ROOM

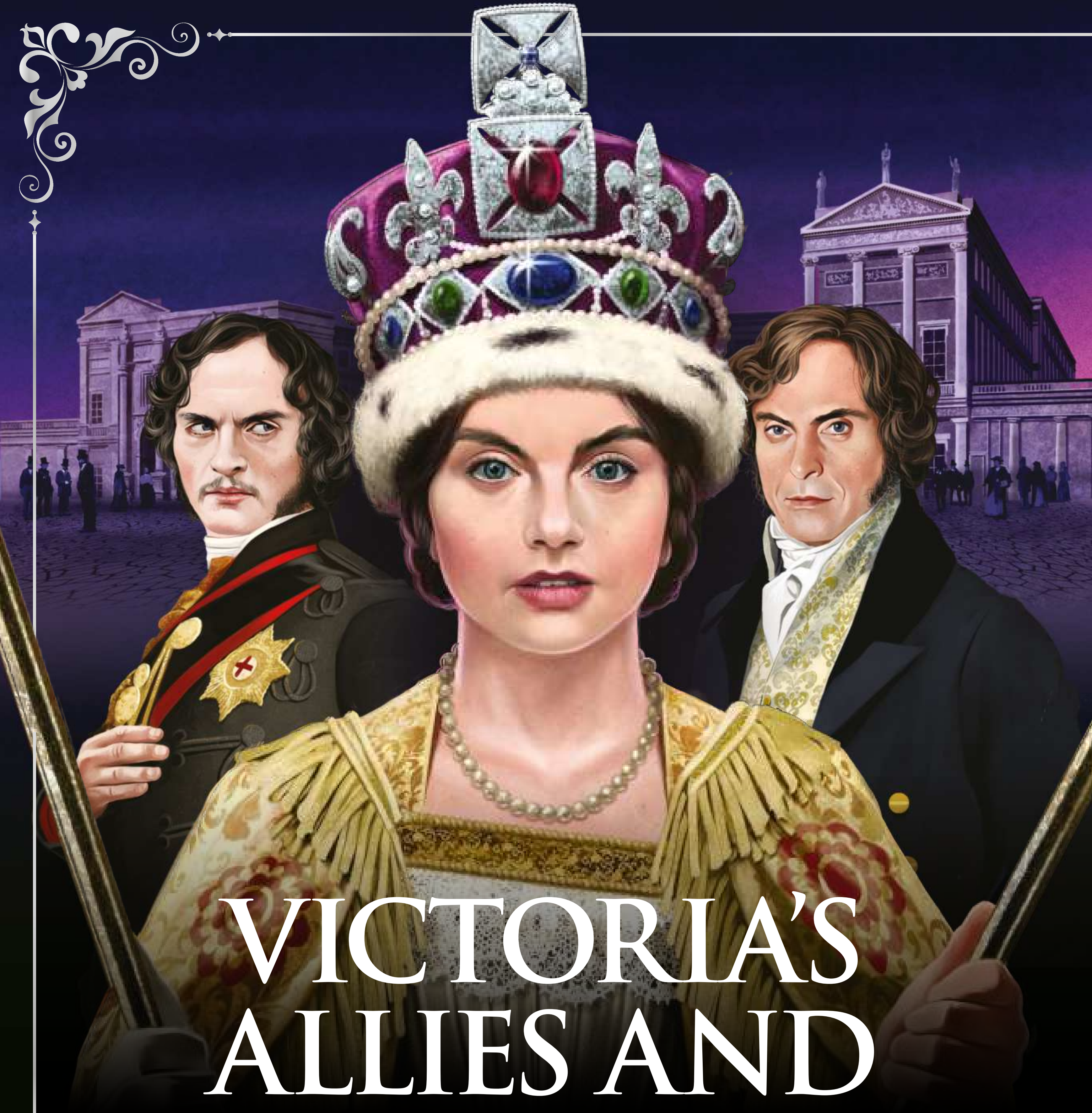
Upon entering this room you'd be forgiven for thinking that you had been transported to an exotic fantasy palace. Its Indian-inspired décor was designed to celebrate the queen being proclaimed Empress of India in 1876. It also provided the estate with a formal banquet hall so that large state functions could be held there. As the ageing monarch was spending more and more time at Osborne, this became a necessary addition to the house.

In 1890-91, Victoria commissioned a design from Rudyard Kipling's father, Lockwood, and his talented student Bhai Ram Singh. The Indian artist produced ornate carvings that were moulded onto the plaster walls and ceiling, as well as other decorative motifs such as the Hindu elephant god Ganesh and the elaborate peacock that presides over the fireplace. Paintings of her Indian subjects by Rudolf Swoboda were transferred from Windsor to Osborne and hung on the walls, and when the work was completed in 1892, the artist also painted Ram Singh. His portrait is distinguished by its heavy gilt frame.

The Durbar Room (from the Hindu meaning 'court') was part of a two-storey building that also accommodated Victoria's youngest child, Princess Beatrice, and her family. One of the conditions of Beatrice marrying Prince Henry of Battenberg in 1885 was that she continued to live with her mother until her death. The first floor had a private entrance for the couple and their four children.



© English Heritage, Alamy



VICTORIA'S ALLIES AND ENEMIES

Throughout her long reign, Queen Victoria gathered plenty of friends, not to mention a few foes – both personal and political

Words **Catherine Curzon & Frances White**

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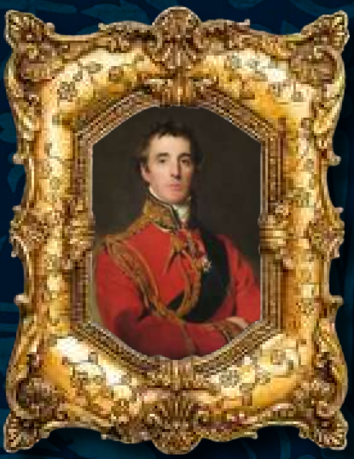
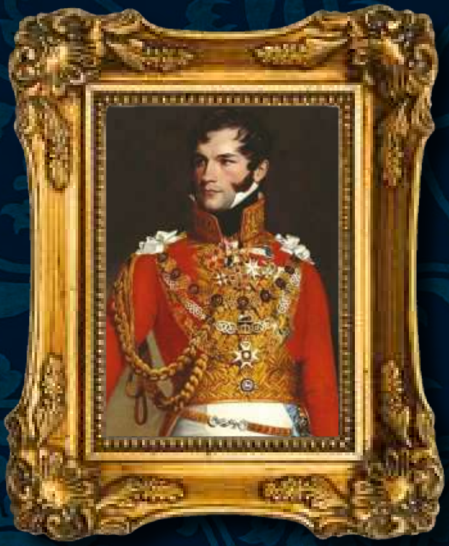


ARTHUR WELLESLEY, 1ST DUKE OF WELLINGTON

ALLY

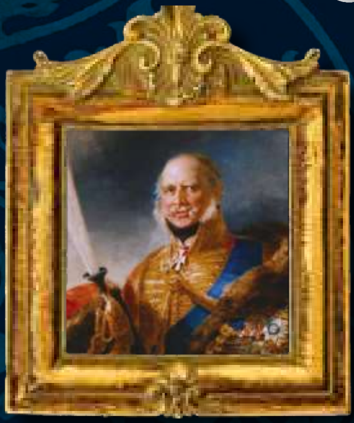
The famous military hero shared a close relationship with Victoria during her early years. He was not only fiercely loyal to her, but he also took on a fatherly role in advising her. Victoria later wrote of him, "He was the greatest man this country ever produced."



LEOPOLD I

ALLY

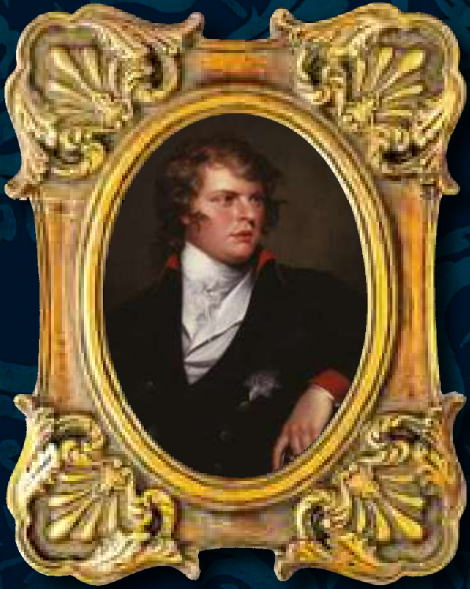
Victoria was fond of Leopold, her maternal uncle and king of the Belgians, and would often seek his advice during her early years as queen. Leopold, who had been married to Princess Charlotte, wrote letters to Victoria and it was he who arranged the marriage between her and Albert, his nephew.



ERNEST AUGUSTUS, KING OF HANOVER

IT'S COMPLICATED

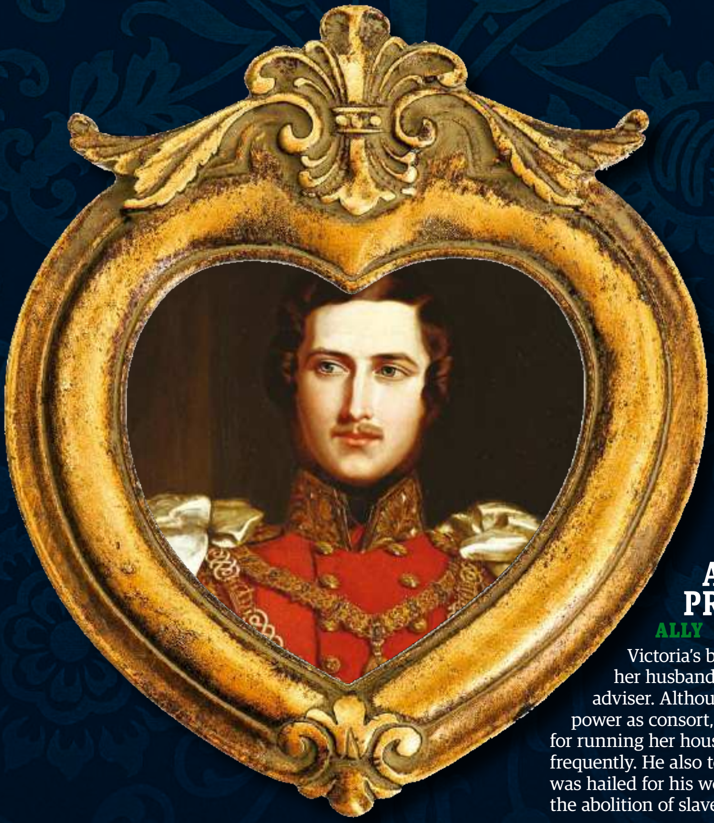
The fifth son of George III, Ernest was made king of Hanover upon the death of his older brother, as Victoria was barred succession there on account of being a woman. Although they maintained an amicable outward appearance, in reality their relationship was a rocky one.



AUGUSTUS, DUKE OF SUSSEX

ALLY

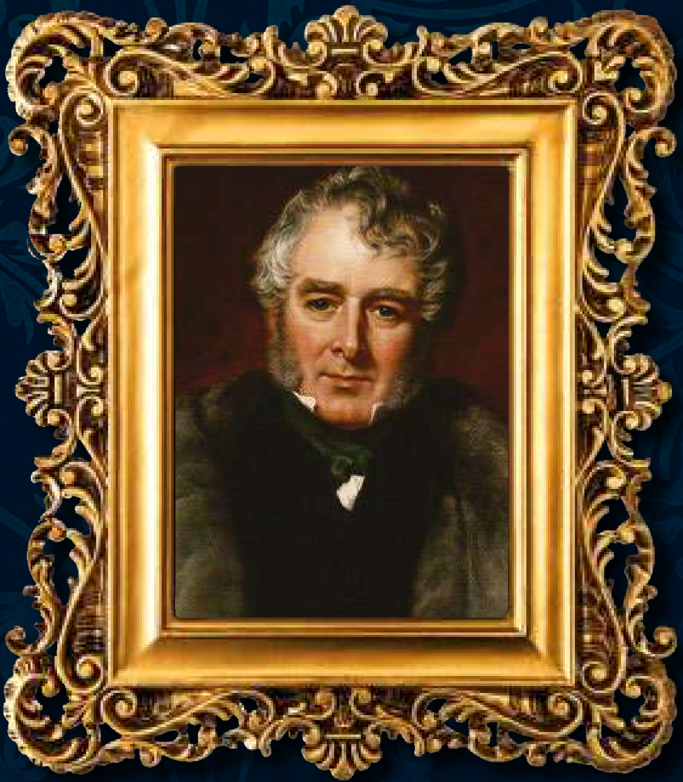
The sixth son of George III, Augustus was Victoria's favourite uncle, and was chosen to give her away at her wedding in place of her father. Because of this close relationship, she appreciated his advice, and when he caused controversy by marrying a non-royal, Victoria made his wife Duchess of Inverness.



ALBERT, PRINCE CONSORT

ALLY

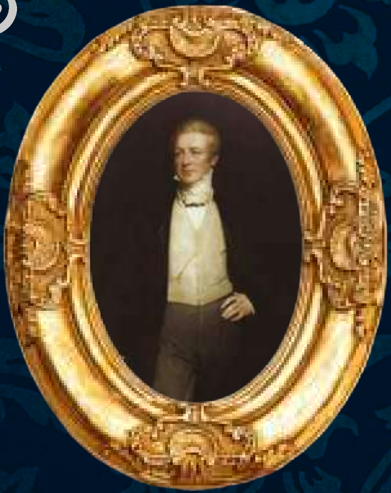
Victoria's beloved Albert became not only her husband but also her most trusted adviser. Although ultimately he held no power as consort, Victoria made him responsible for running her household and sought his counsel frequently. He also took on many public roles and was hailed for his work in education reform and the abolition of slavery.



LORD MELBOURNE

ALLY

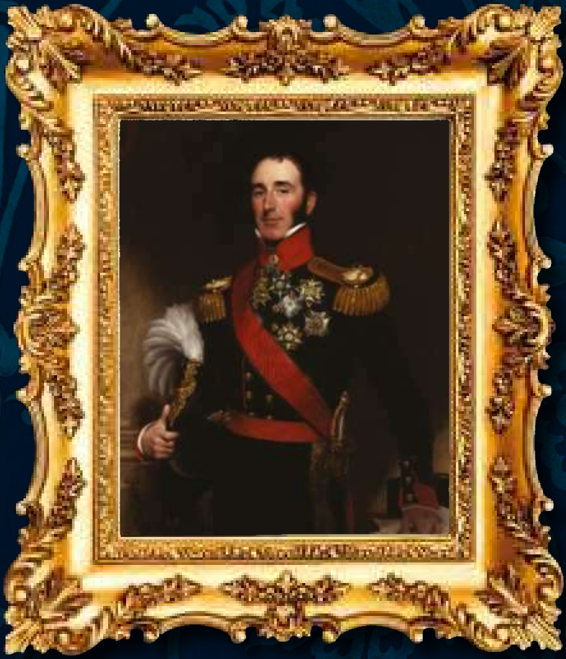
An aristocratic Whig, Melbourne became prime minister in 1834, then served again between 1835-39 and for a third and final time between 1839-41. He developed a close relationship with the young Victoria, serving as her adviser in matters of politics. This relationship would spark controversy for the queen and earn her the nickname 'Mrs Melbourne'.



SIR ROBERT PEEL

ALLY

When Robert Peel, the Tory leader, came into power, Victoria was horrified due to her devotion to Melbourne. Upon Albert's careful coaching, Victoria became fond of Peel, and upon his death, proclaimed him "Worthy Peel, a man of unbounded loyalty, courage, patriotism and highmindedness."



KAISER WILHELM II

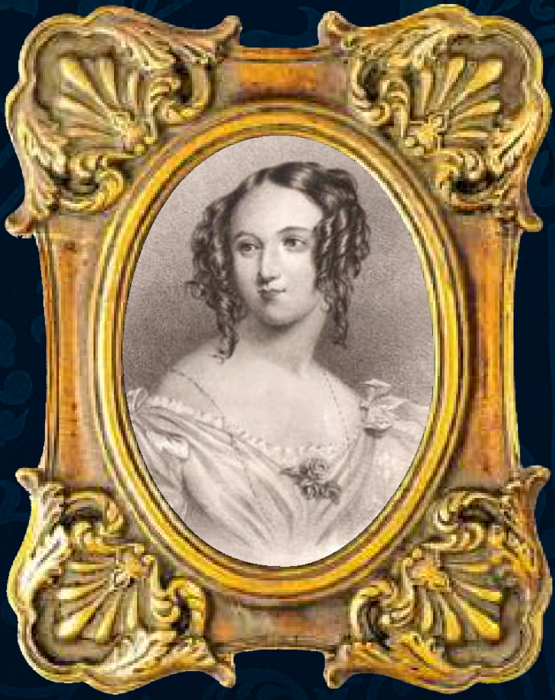
ENEMY

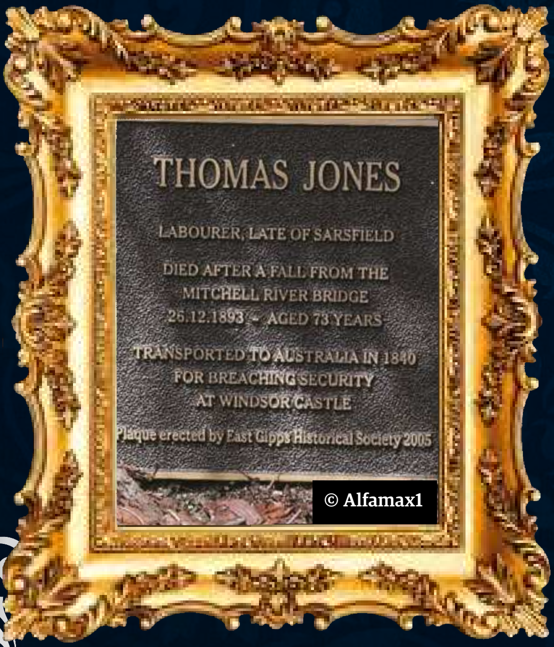
Though Victoria had always doted on Wilhelm, her eldest grandchild, she found herself increasingly antagonised by his haughty behaviour towards his English family, whom he insisted call him "His Imperial Majesty". She feared that such unreasonable behaviour might eventually have an impact on the political relationship between the United Kingdom and Germany.

JOHN CONROY

ENEMY

Conroy served as one of Victoria's first advisers, and he was very close to her mother, sparking rumours of more than friendship between the two. His efforts to install Victoria's mother as regent were thwarted, and Victoria was quick to expel him from her household upon becoming queen.





THOMAS JONES

LABOURER, LATE OF SARSFIELD

DIED AFTER A FALL FROM THE
MITCHELL RIVER BRIDGE
26.12.1893 - AGED 73 YEARS

TRANSPORTED TO AUSTRALIA IN 1840
FOR BREACHING SECURITY
AT WINDSOR CASTLE

Plaque erected by East Gipps Historical Society 2005

© Alfamax1

EDWARD JONES

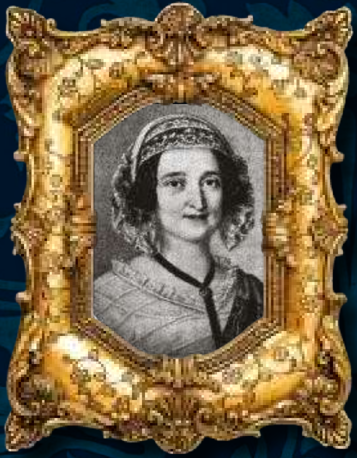
ENEMY

"The Boy Jones" gained infamy for breaking into Buckingham Palace several times between 1838 and 1841, on one occasion making off with the queen's underwear! With fears growing for Victoria's safety and questions raised about her security, the teenager was sentenced to imprisonment and hard labour. Jones eventually joined the navy and settled in Australia, changing his name to Thomas Jones.

LADY FLORA HASTINGS

IT'S COMPLICATED

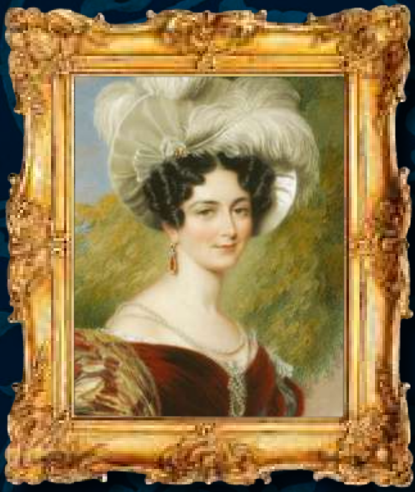
As lady-in-waiting to Victoria's mother, Lady Flora was rumoured to have been the lover of John Conroy. When she put on weight and Victoria heard rumours of an illegitimate pregnancy, she banished the attendant from court. In fact, Lady Flora was suffering from terminal cancer and the queen's decision to dismiss her caused a public outcry.



BARONESS LEHZEN

ALLY

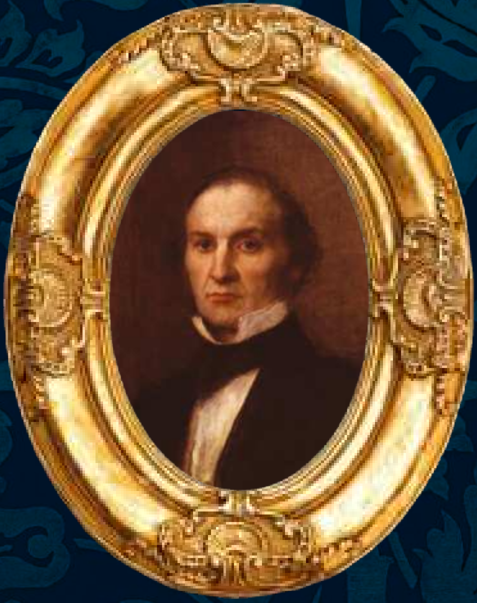
Lehzen took over care of Victoria when she was just five years old and became devoted to the princess. Victoria, in turn, grew very close to her baroness; they shared a mutual distaste for her mother and Conroy. Lehzen enjoyed a prominent position in court when Victoria was crowned, serving as chief liaison.



VICTORIA OF SAXE-COBURG-SAALFELD

IT'S COMPLICATED

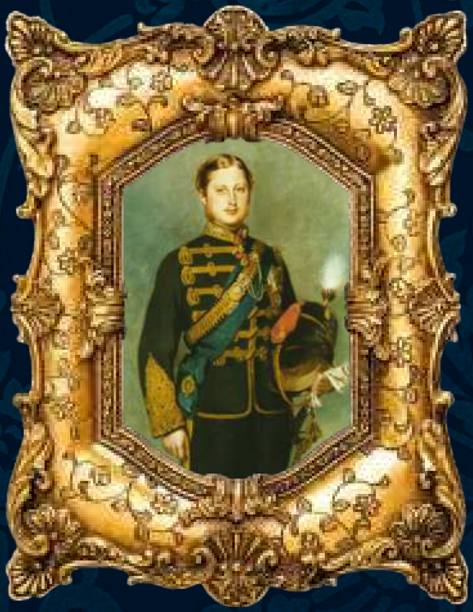
Victoria's mother was the prominent figure in her early years. Alongside John Conroy she kept the Princess isolated from her peers and under strict control. When Victoria became queen, she sent her mother to separate accommodations far from her own. It wasn't until the birth of Victoria's first child that the duchess was welcomed back into the inner circle, where she remained.



WILLIAM GLADSTONE

ENEMY

Four times Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, William Gladstone and Queen Victoria didn't get on. She thought him dismissive of her and towards the end of his life wondered at his mental ability to hold office. He in turn recalled that the queen thought him so unimportant that it was fifty years before she deigned to shake his hand.



EDWARD VII

IT'S COMPLICATED

Victoria always disapproved of her eldest son's riotous ways and fun-loving approach to life. When he snuck an Irish actress into his military camp, Prince Albert visited Edward at Cambridge to reprimand him. Albert was unwell on his return and died a fortnight later. Queen Victoria always blamed Edward for her husband's death and resented him to the end of her days.

HENRY JOHN TEMPLE, 3RD VISCOUNT PALMERSTON

IT'S COMPLICATED

Palmerston served twice as Prime Minister and though popular with the public, he never won the trust of Queen Victoria nor Prince Albert. Palmerston's glittering political career made him a force to be reckoned with and despite constitutional quarrels, after Palmerston's death the queen admitted that she had thought him a good prime minister even if they had not been friends.

PRINCE GEORGE OF CAMBRIDGE

ENEMY

"A woman on the throne of England, how ridiculous!" So said Prince George of Cambridge when Victoria turned 18. Victoria's birth pushed the prince further down the line of succession and though he was a potential suitor for her, his efforts at wooing failed. Though Victoria and George became friends, his disapproval of her coronation must have stung.

ASSASSINATION ATTEMPTS

Queen Victoria wasn't always popular, but not all her critics were harmless. A fair few actually took it upon themselves to try and take her life!

JOHN FRANCIS

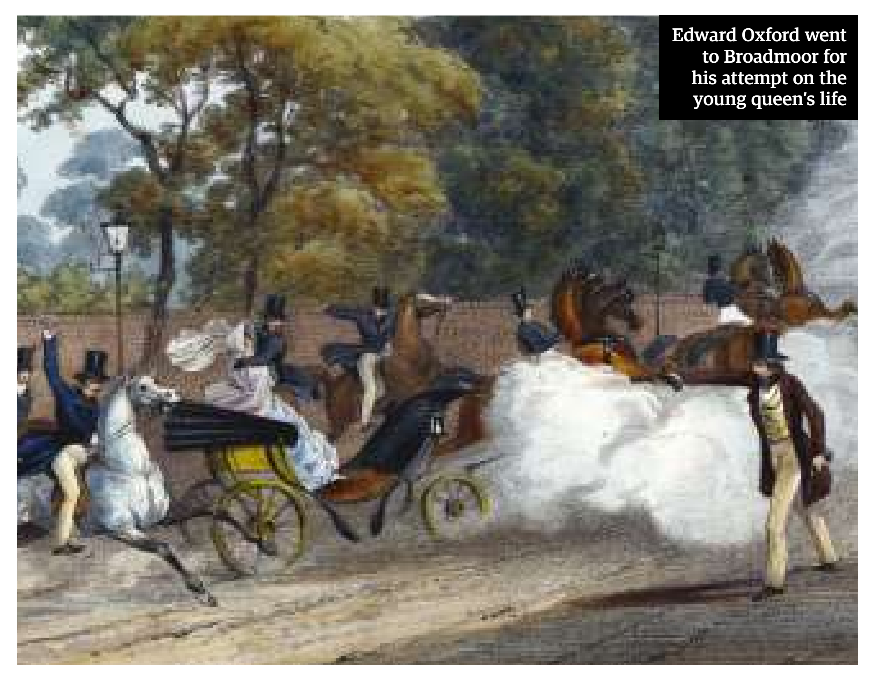
29 MAY 1842

As Victoria and Albert returned to Buckingham Palace from their regular Sunday service, 20-year-old cabinetmaker John Francis pointed a flintlock pistol at the queen. The gun failed to fire and Francis fled into Green Park. The following day the couple rode out again, hoping to draw out the would-be assassin. Francis took the bait but this time, officers were waiting and pounced as soon as he pulled the trigger. He was sent to Newgate and was sentenced to be hanged, drawn and quartered. Eventually his sentence was commuted to transportation and hard labour.

WILLIAM HAMILTON

19 JUNE 1849

As the queen and her children rode along Constitution Hill to celebrate her birthday, 24-year-old William Hamilton took a shot at her. Hamilton had fled his Irish homeland earlier that decade to escape the famine and had been unable to find employment. He hoped that, by shooting at the queen, he would be sent to prison and escape the grind of poverty and unemployment. In fact, he was transported to Gibraltar, where he served seven years.



Edward Oxford went to Broadmoor for his attempt on the young queen's life

JOHN WILLIAM BEAN

3 JULY 1842

Just a month after Francis' assassination attempt, John William Bean was next in line. Suffering from a spinal deformity, 17-year-old Bean stood just four feet tall and believed that killing Victoria would change his life. As the royal carriage entered the Mall Bean drew a pistol, but it failed to fire. Though he made his escape, the police swept across London and rounded up anyone with the same spinal deformity as the would-be-assassin. They eventually arrested Bean and found that his gun had been loaded with harmless tobacco, not gunpowder. He was sentenced to 18 months hard labour for his trouble.

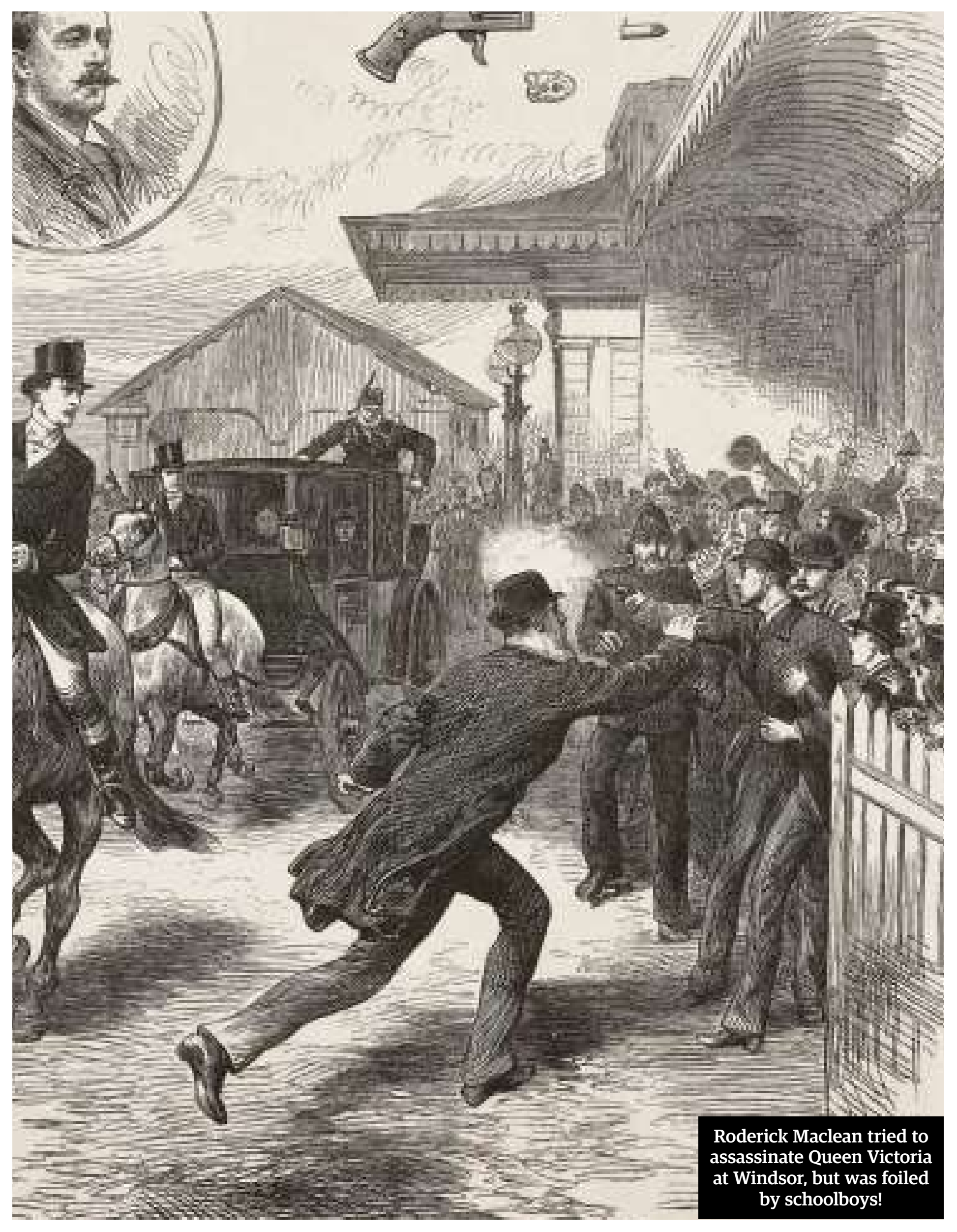
EDWARD OXFORD

10 JUNE 1840

Four months after Queen Victoria and Prince Albert were married, the couple took a ride in an open carriage along Constitution Hill. It was there that 18-year-old Edward Oxford fired a duelling pistol at Victoria from just half a dozen paces away. The shot missed and by the time he had raised his second pistol, the queen had ducked out of range. Oxford was found not guilty by reason of insanity but was held in mental asylums for the next 24 years. He eventually moved to Australia, where he lived out the rest of his life as a respectable family man.

> "Edward Oxford fired a duelling pistol at Victoria from just half a dozen paces away. The shot missed and by the time he had raised his second pistol, the queen had ducked out of range"

"Roderick Maclean was rumoured to have been driven to kill when the queen dismissed some poems he had sent to her... He shot at her but was tackled by students from Eton College"


Roderick Maclean tried to assassinate Queen Victoria at Windsor, but was foiled by schoolboys!

ROBERT PATE
27 JUNE 1850

Once a respected soldier, Robert Pate had become notorious in London for his eccentric behaviour and dandified dress. He happened upon Queen Victoria as she left Cambridge House and as her carriage slowed to a halt, took the opportunity to strike her on the forehead with his cane. The queen was left with a black eye and Pate was sentenced to seven years transportation in Tasmania. Whilst in Australia he married a wealthy woman and lived out his days in contentment.

ARTHUR O'CONNOR
29 FEBRUARY 1872

17-year-old Arthur O'Connor scaled the wall at Buckingham Palace and concealed himself within the grounds, lying in wait for the queen when she returned from a carriage ride. As he raised his pistol at point blank range, O'Connor had reckoned without her loyal retainer, John Brown, who wrestled him to the ground. In fact the flintlock was inoperable but O'Connor had hoped to use it to force the queen to agree to the release of Irish political prisoners. Whilst Brown was given a medal, O'Connor received twenty strokes of the rod and transportation to Australia.

RODERICK MACLEAN
2 MARCH 1882

Roderick Maclean was the last would-be assassin that Queen Victoria faced. The monarch was visiting Windsor when the 28-year-old, who suffered from mental illness, shot at her. He was rumoured to have been driven to kill when the queen dismissed some poems he had sent to her. Maclean was tackled by students from Eton College who had gathered to greet the queen and were armed with umbrellas, which they used to strike him. Though found not guilty by reason of insanity, he was incarcerated in Broadmoor for the rest of his days.

VICTORIA'S POWER AND INFLUENCE

Far from the passive, politically detached monarch she is often painted as, Victoria was a driving force in making Britain a leading world power

Words **Alicea Francis**

When Victoria ascended the throne, the monarchy was in a precarious position. Radicalists had grown in strength throughout the 18th and early 19th centuries, many of them calling for an end to the Crown. Meanwhile in Europe and its colonies, republicanism had taken hold, first with the American Revolution and then with the French. The power of the British monarchy had been in steady decline ever since the Glorious Revolution of 1688, when the Bill of Rights had made clear that the king or queen ruled only with the consent of Parliament. But it was the Reform Crisis of 1830-32, during which Victoria's predecessor William IV refused to pass new reform acts, that caused support to plummet. If the British monarchy was to survive, it would need to be satisfied serving a primarily ceremonial function, with only nominal involvement in state affairs.

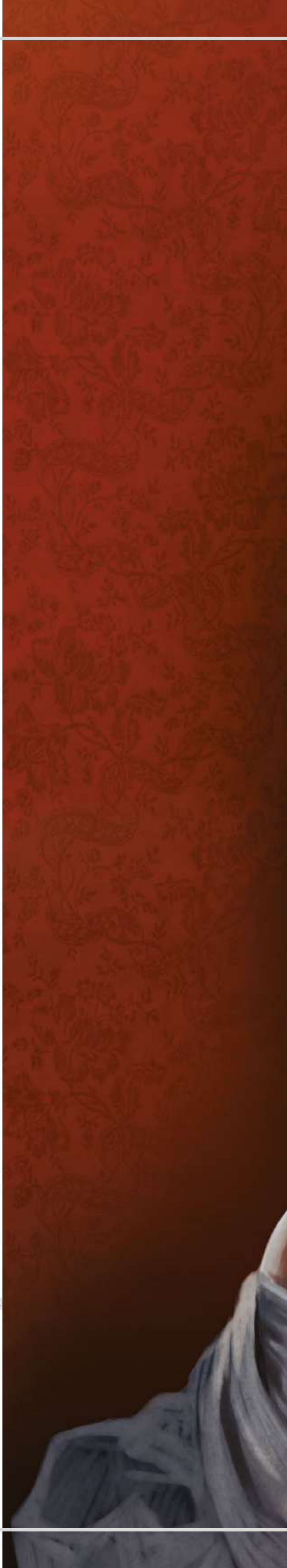
So when the king died five years later, few could have imagined a better successor. His niece, Princess Alexandrina Victoria of Kent, was just 18 years old. Slim, fair and fresh-faced, with little knowledge of politics, she bore no resemblance to her domineering uncles, and for that the public loved her.

But there was more to this young girl than met the eye. Victoria was quick-witted, practical and, most of all, strong-willed. Within hours of receiving the news of her uncle's death, she had ordered her overbearing mother, the Duchess of Kent, to be moved into an entirely separate suite of apartments. The move had likely been encouraged by Victoria's governess, Baroness Lehzen, who believed that the queen should think independently from her mother and her allies. In response, the duchess could barely conceal her rage and disappointment, exclaiming, "There is no more future for me." It was the beginning of the end for her influence over the new queen.

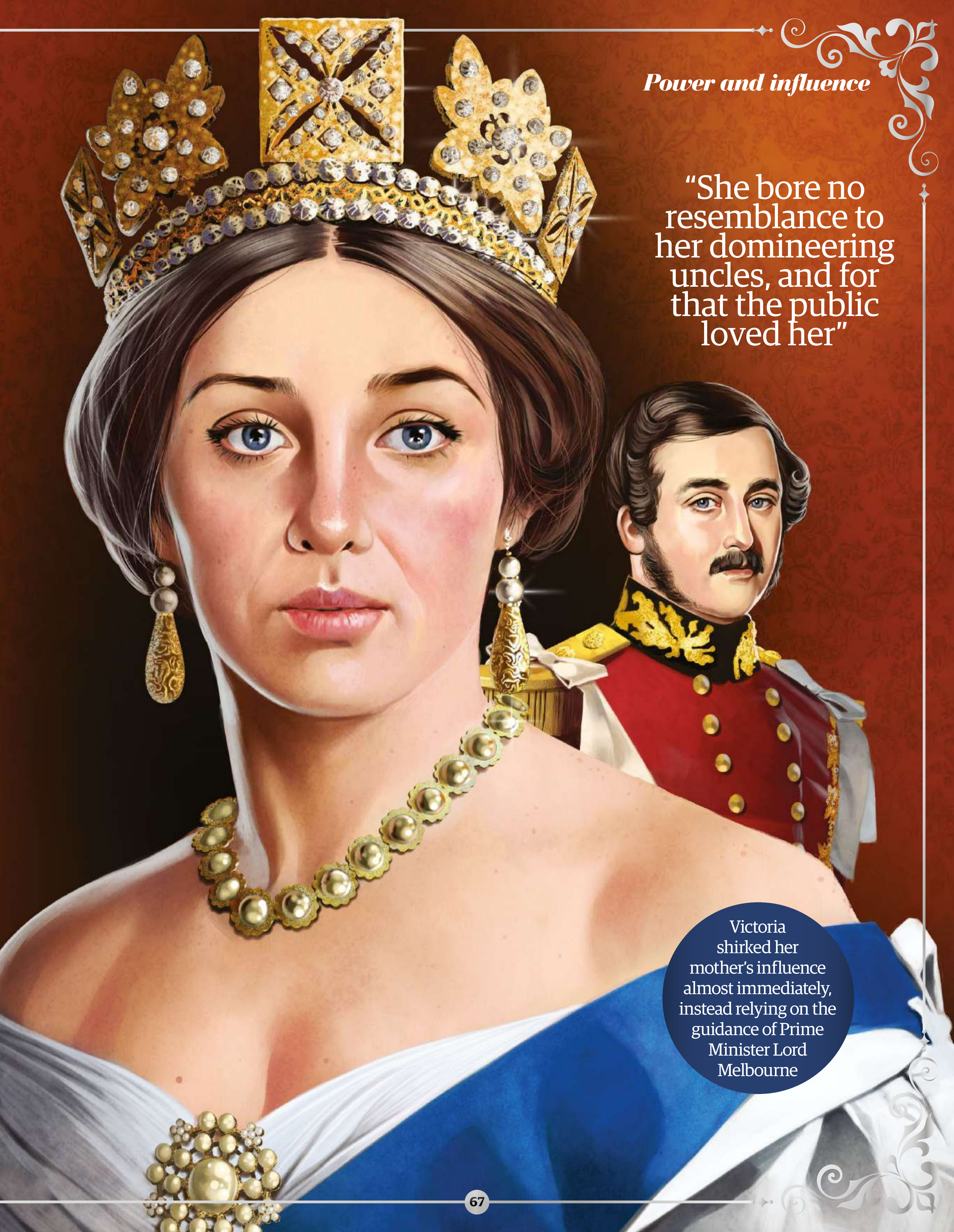
During the first few years of Victoria's reign, Lehzen exerted a strong but subtle influence over the queen's private and political affairs. But she was not the only person in court to wield power over the new monarch. Baron Stockmar had been sent to Buckingham Palace by King Leopold I of Belgium, Victoria's uncle, to act as an advisor to the young queen, but he was also an emissary.

Leopold hoped that through Stockmar he would be able to influence British foreign policy; his country was caught in the middle of Franco-Prussian conflicts and he feared invasion from both sides. He needed the British to support Belgian neutrality by means of a treaty that would promise to protect the country's position should such an invasion occur. Leopold regularly corresponded with Victoria, providing her with encouragement, general reflections and gentle advice on foreign policy, while Stockmar became a permanent presence in the palace.

But these three figures of influence paled in comparison one man, who from the very beginning of her reign came to dominate Victoria's life. William Lamb, more commonly known as Lord Melbourne, had been prime minister for three

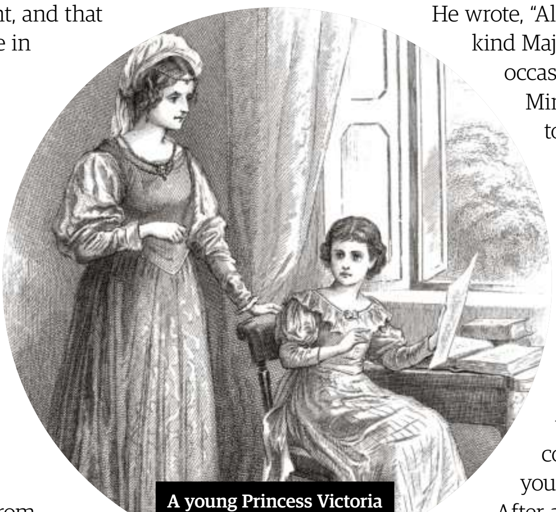


> “She bore no resemblance to her domineering uncles, and for that the public loved her”



Victoria shirked her mother's influence almost immediately, instead relying on the guidance of Prime Minister Lord Melbourne years, and was a man renowned for his calm and sensitive temperament, charm and good looks. From the very start he treated her with the utmost respect, and Victoria returned his high favour. When she received Melbourne the day after her uncle's death, she told him that it had long been her intention to retain both him and his Whig government, and that the country "could not be in better hands."

As time went on, Melbourne became the queen's most trusted advisor, and his manner towards her combined the watchfulness and respect of a statesman with the tender care of a parent. He regularly informed her of the goings-on in Parliament, and she wrote, "I have so many communications from the Ministers, and from me to them, and I get so many papers to sign every day, that I have always a very great deal to do. I delight in this work."

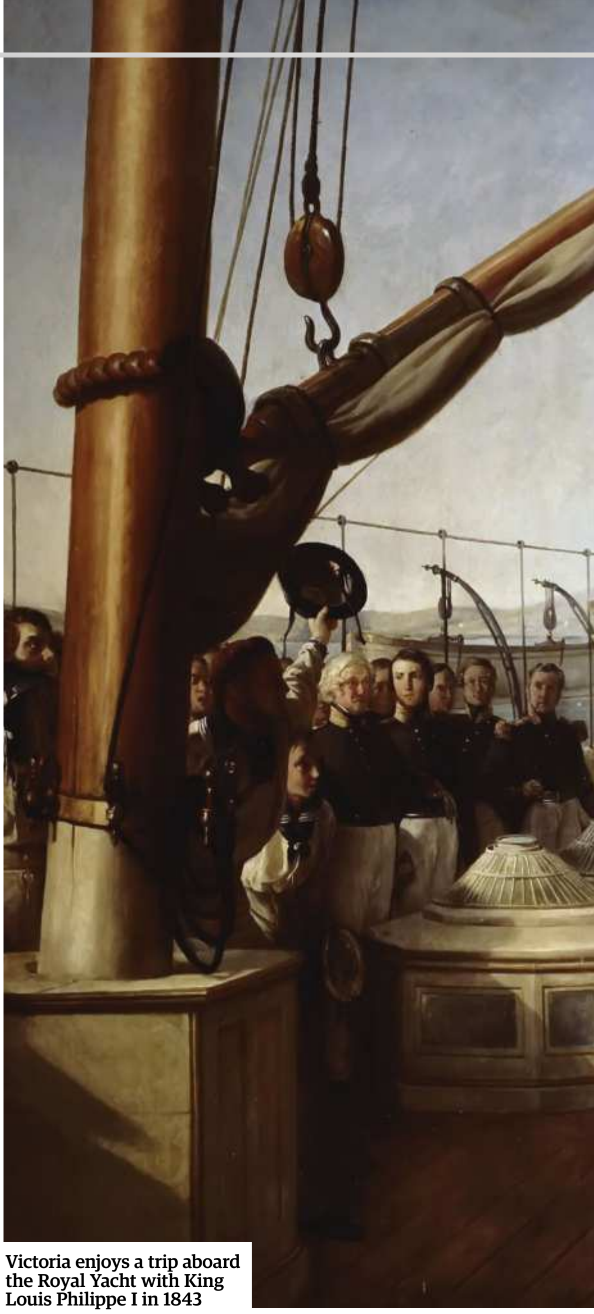

A young Princess Victoria pictured in childhood with her governess

Meanwhile, King Leopold's correspondence had become more frequent and insistent than ever. The situation in Europe was worsening and he believed it was vital that England expressed its support; to not be with Belgium was, he believed, to be against it. Maybe by putting a little pressure on Victoria he could persuade England to sign a treaty.

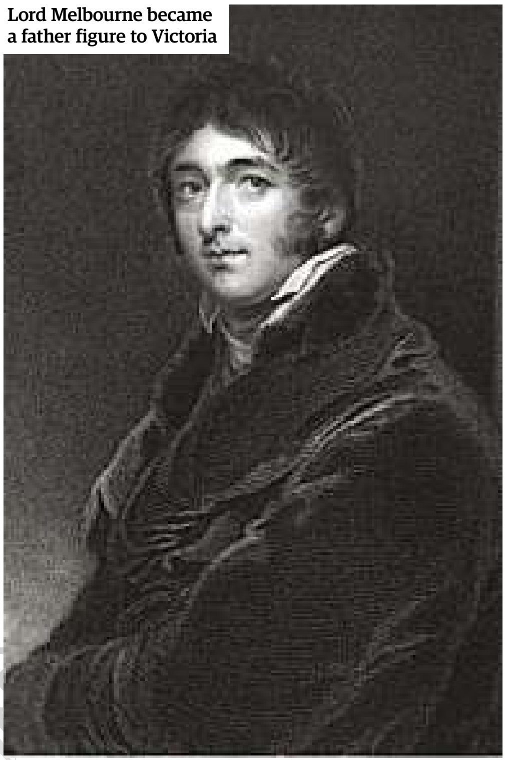
He wrote, "All I want from your kind Majesty is that you will occasionally express to your Ministers, and particularly to good Lord Melbourne, that, as far as it is compatible with the interests of your own dominions, you do not wish that your Government should take the lead in such measures as might in a short time bring on the destruction of this country, as well as that of your uncle and his family."

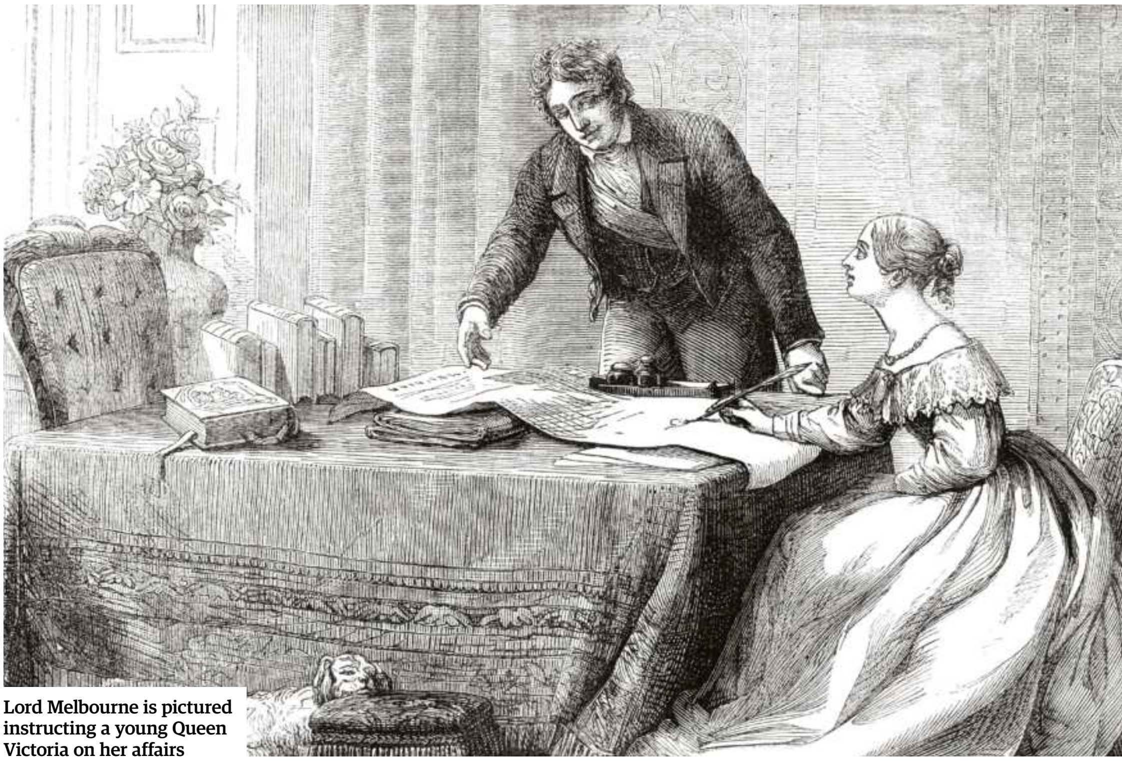
After a week of reflection, she replied, 'It would, indeed, my dearest Uncle, be very wrong of you, if you thought my feelings of warm and devoted attachment to you, and of great affection

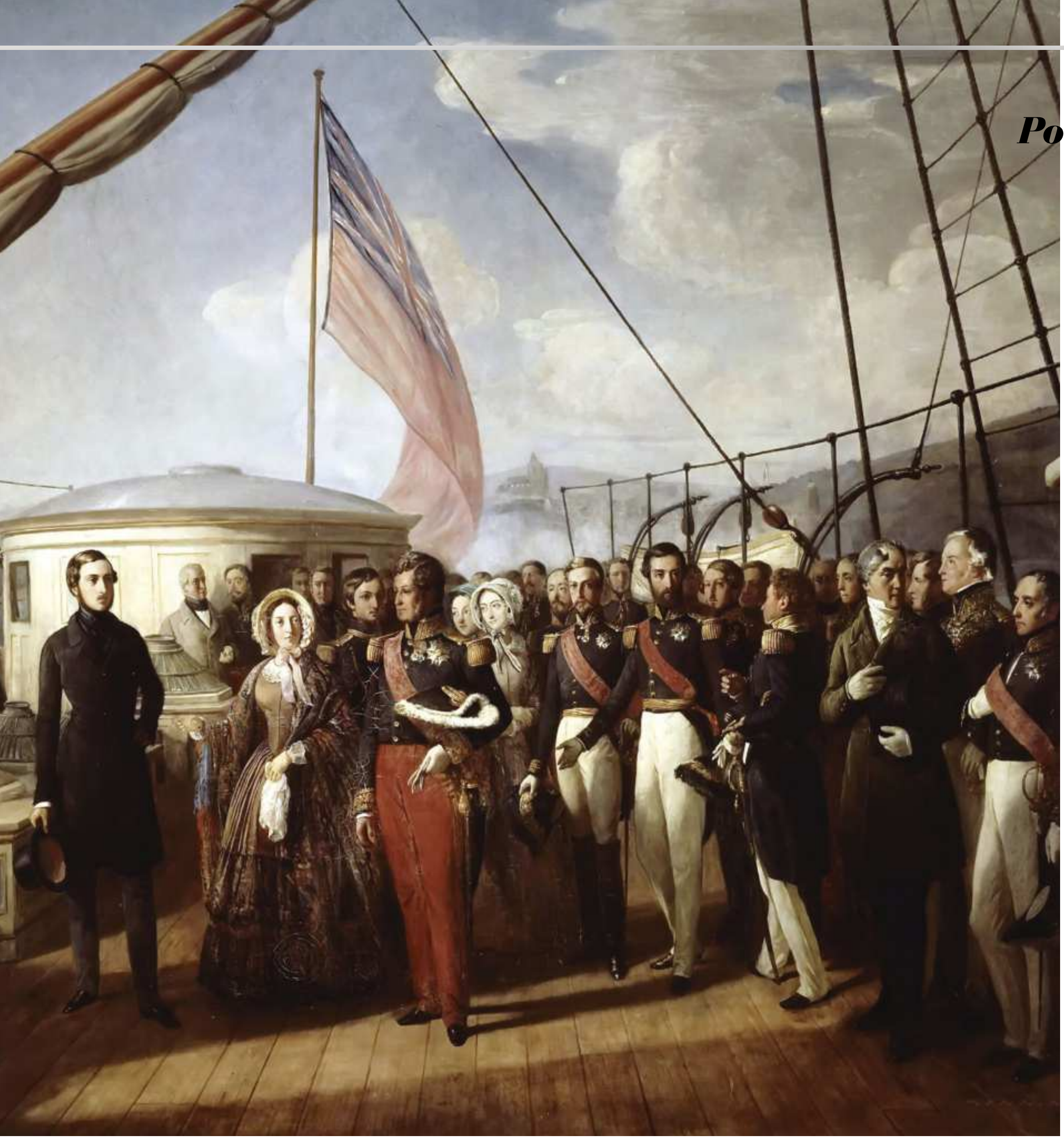
> "Melbourne became her most trusted advisor, and his manner towards Victoria combined the respect of a statesman with the tender care of a parent"


Victoria enjoys a trip aboard the Royal Yacht with King Louis Philippe I in 1843

Lord Melbourne became a father figure to Victoria




Lord Melbourne is pictured instructing a young Queen Victoria on her affairs



for you, could be changed – nothing can ever change them." Her references to foreign politics, though lengthy and elaborate, were decidedly non-committal, and simply assured her uncle that "both Lord Melbourne and Lord Palmerston are most anxious at all times for the prosperity and welfare of Belgium."

Despite this, a few months later, Leopold wrote once again urging for the support of her government. She replied, "My dear Uncle, though you seem not to dislike my political sparks, I think it is better not to increase them, as they might finally take fire, particularly as I see with regret that upon this one subject we cannot agree. I shall, therefore, limit myself to my expressions of very sincere wishes for the welfare and prosperity of Belgium." The conversation was over, and Victoria had demonstrated that the foreign policy of England was not his province. This was even more impressive given the respectfulness and affection she had maintained throughout the exchange. It was a soft power that had rarely been seen before.

Victoria's public support took a turn for the worse when, in 1839, she accused Lady Flora Hastings – her mother's lady-in-waiting – of having an affair with Sir John Conroy, her mother's comptroller. This arose from rumours of Lady Flora's seemingly pregnant figure, which were proved wrong when she died a few months later of a cancerous tumour. Victoria expressed her regret, but failed to dismiss Sir James. The public were outraged, and the popularity with which she had begun her reign quickly ebbed away.

Her situation worsened when she heard news that Lord Melbourne and his Whig government were to resign following to a dispute in the House of Commons. She was asked to summon the Tory leader, Sir Robert Peel – a man whom Victoria disliked immensely. When he tentatively asked for some of her Whig ladies-in-waiting to be replaced with Tories, she refused. The dispute that unravelled would come to be known as The Bedchamber Crisis. Peel refused to form a government and Lord Melbourne remained prime minister. The queen had won, but the hearts of the British had been lost.

It was shortly after The Bedchamber Crisis that Victoria's German cousin, Prince Albert, arrived at Windsor. Unbeknownst to her, the wheels that had been polished and primed for so long were set in motion. The queen immediately fell for her handsome European relative, and within days she

FRIEND OR FOE?

Victoria's relationships with her prime ministers ranged from mutual adoration to loathing

HOT

Lord Melbourne

1834 • Apr 1835 – Aug 1841

The Whig Melbourne was home secretary from 1830 until he replaced Lord Grey as prime minister in 1834. He became a mentor to the young and newly crowned Victoria, who said she loved him "like a father".

Benjamin Disraeli

Feb 1868 – Dec 1868 • Feb 1874 – Apr 1880

Disraeli was pivotal in the creation of the Conservative party. Upon first securing power in 1868, he set out to woo and flatter the queen. In turn, Victoria deeply admired and appreciated him.

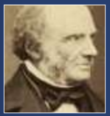
Sir Robert Peel

Aug 1841 – Jun 1846

The pair got off to a bad start when the newly elected Tory prime minister asked Victoria to make some changes to her household, in which most of her ladies were Whigs. However, in later years their relationship did improve somewhat.

Lord John Russell

Jun 1846 – Feb 1852 • Oct 1865 – Jun 1866



Victoria's attitude towards the Whig and Liberal Lord Russell was tainted by her close friend Lord Aberdeen, prime minister between 1852 and 1855, who blamed Russell for the collapse of his government.

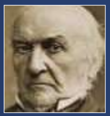
Lord Palmerston

Feb 1855 – Feb 1858 • Jun 1859 – Oct 1865

Another relationship that started badly, then foreign minister Palmerston ruffled royal feathers when he sent a private note congratulating French president Louis Bonaparte on his coup.

William Gladstone

Served four terms between 1868 and 1894. His first term lasted from 1868-1874.



Disraeli's great rival, Gladstone served as Liberal prime minister four times, yet never won the affection offered by the queen to his opposition. She described him as a "mischievous firebrand, arrogant, tyrannical and obstinate".

COLD

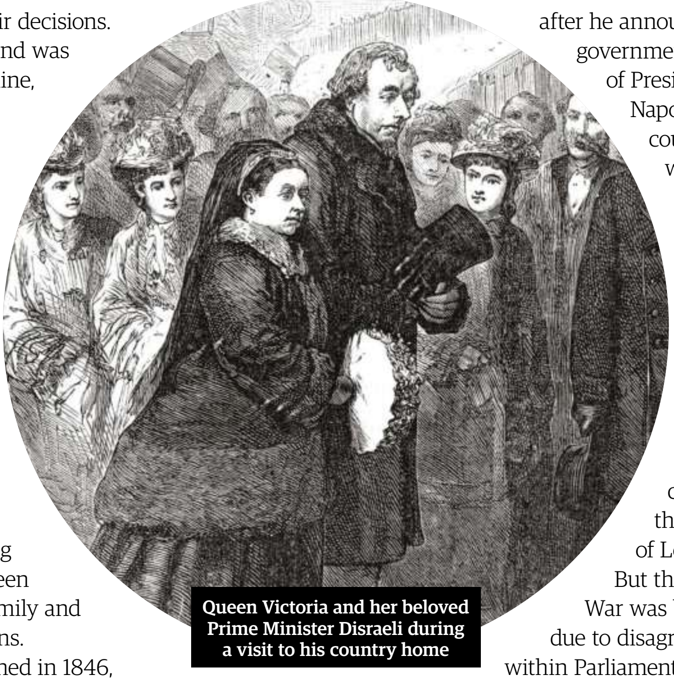
had asked for his hand in marriage. He gladly accepted and wedding plans commenced.

But again, the Tories stepped in to burst her bubble of happiness when they refused to grant Albert the £50,000 annual settlement that Victoria had requested for him. They reminded her that the majority of the population were suffering from extreme poverty, so a sum of £30,000 would be more than adequate. The queen was fuming, and swore not to invite a single Tory to her wedding.

Even after marriage, the prince failed to gain any sort of power, either in Parliament or indeed his own household. In the palace, Baroness Lehzen was the dominant force; she remained Victoria's closest advisor, retaining a private doorway into the royal bedroom, and Albert detested her for it. The birth of their first child, Victoria, Princess Royal, helped his position, and when the child became seriously ill under the watch of Lehzen, he insisted that she be dismissed. Reluctantly, Victoria agreed. The arrival of the children also helped to rebuild the queen's reputation. The couple regularly commissioned paintings of their family in intimate settings, giving the public the impression that they were just like them. Victoria became an icon of 19th-century femininity and was described as the 'mother of the nation'.

In 1841 the Tories came to power under Sir Robert Peel, and Albert persuaded the queen to take a less hostile view of her new prime minister. Finding Peel to be not dissimilar to himself, Albert began to take a more active role in politics. In the ministerial crises of 1845 and 1846, the prince played a dominating role. Everybody recognised that he was the real centre of the negotiations. By the end of Peel's administration, Albert had become, in effect, the king of England.

Victoria, too, strove to influence domestic and foreign policy from the 1840s onwards, intervening when necessary. Although she never vetoed legislation or contested election results, she made clear that she was ambivalent about democracy, and informed her ministers when she disagreed with their decisions. In 1845, when Ireland was hit by a potato famine, she personally donated £2,000 to famine relief - more than any other individual donor. She became known as the 'Famine Queen'. Internationally, she took a keen interest in improving relations between France and Britain, making and hosting several visits between the British royal family and the House of Orléans.

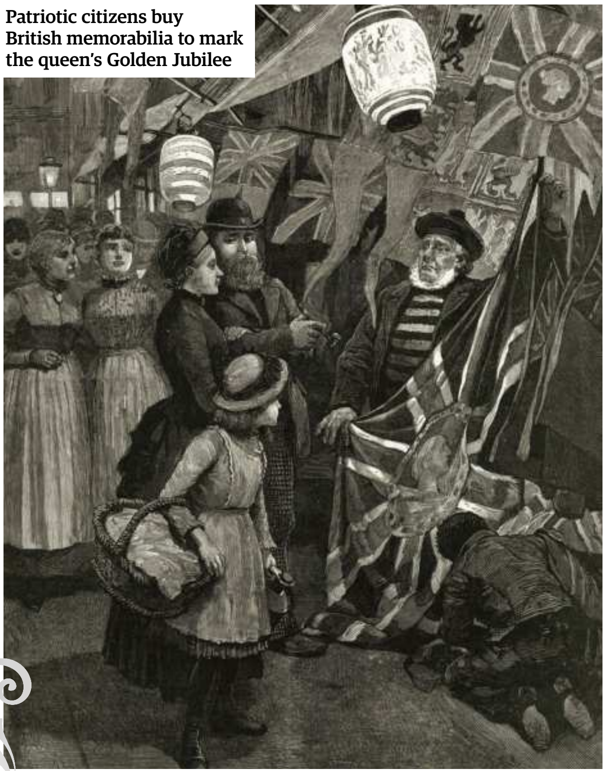


Queen Victoria and her beloved Prime Minister Disraeli during a visit to his country home

When Peel resigned in 1846, he was replaced by the Liberal Lord John Russell. Victoria found him to be stubborn, opinionated and graceless. But worse than this, he either could not or would not curb the impudence of his foreign minister, Lord Palmerston. Many important Foreign Office despatches were either submitted to the queen so late that there was no time to correct them, or they were not submitted to her at all. Even if she was given a chance to see them in time, they were sent off in their original form, regardless of whether changes had been suggested. Victoria demanded on several occasions for his dismissal, but her requests fell on deaf ears. It wasn't until 1851, after he announced the British government's approval of President Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte's coup in France, without informing or consulting the prime minister, that he was finally removed.

However, less than a year later Palmerston was back in the cabinet under the leadership of Lord Aberdeen. But the Crimean War was brewing, and due to disagreements within Parliament he resigned.

The public was furious. They had been reassured that this man would lead them through the terrible war, and now he was gone. They desperately sought someone to blame, and they found him sitting on the throne - a foreigner in one of Britain's highest positions of power. Albert was declared a traitor, and a constitutional crisis ensued. Whispers circulated that the prince had

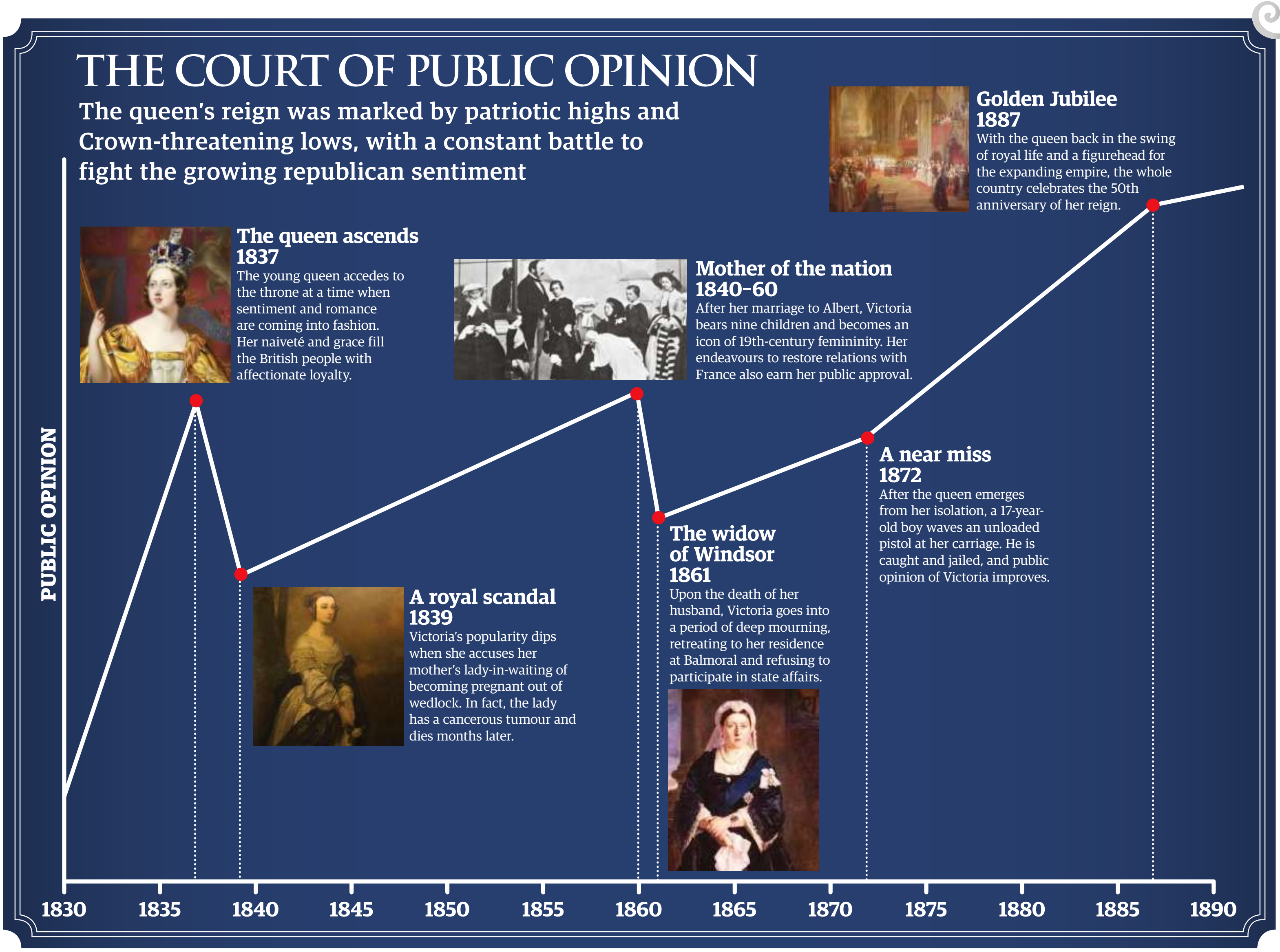


Patriotic citizens buy British memorabilia to mark the queen's Golden Jubilee

Thousands line the streets to watch the royal procession during the Golden Jubilee

THE COURT OF PUBLIC OPINION

The queen's reign was marked by patriotic highs and Crown-threatening lows, with a constant battle to fight the growing republican sentiment



Golden Jubilee 1887
With the queen back in the swing of royal life and a figurehead for the expanding empire, the whole country celebrates the 50th anniversary of her reign.

The queen ascends 1837
The young queen accedes to the throne at a time when sentiment and romance are coming into fashion. Her naiveté and grace fill the British people with affectionate loyalty.

Mother of the nation 1840-60
After her marriage to Albert, Victoria bears nine children and becomes an icon of 19th-century femininity. Her endeavours to restore relations with France also earn her public approval.

A near miss 1872
After the queen emerges from her isolation, a 17-year-old boy waves an unloaded pistol at her carriage. He is caught and jailed, and public opinion of Victoria improves.

The widow of Windsor 1861
Upon the death of her husband, Victoria goes into a period of deep mourning, retreating to her residence at Balmoral and refusing to participate in state affairs.

A royal scandal 1839
Victoria's popularity dips when she accuses her mother's lady-in-waiting of becoming pregnant out of wedlock. In fact, the lady has a cancerous tumour and dies months later.

been seized, found guilty of high treason and was to be taken to the Tower of London. The queen herself, some claimed, had been arrested, and large crowds gathered at the Tower to watch their imprisonment. Palmerston eventually returned to cabinet and, in 1855, Victoria was forced to appoint him prime minister, considered to be the only man capable of leading Britain to victory.

Contrary to the queen's expectations, she and Albert agreed that of all her prime ministers, Palmerston gave her the least trouble. It was fortunate that his temperament had mellowed, for it was he who had to deal with the queen when Albert died in December 1861. Victoria was inconsolable and vowed to withdraw from all affairs of state. She told Palmerston that he would have to conduct his business through one of her daughters, or her private secretary. Palmerston urged that this was impossible, and they came to a strange compromise: at privy council meetings the queen would sit in the next room with the door between them open, and would then authorise the clerk to give her assent to the matters laid before the councillors for their approval.

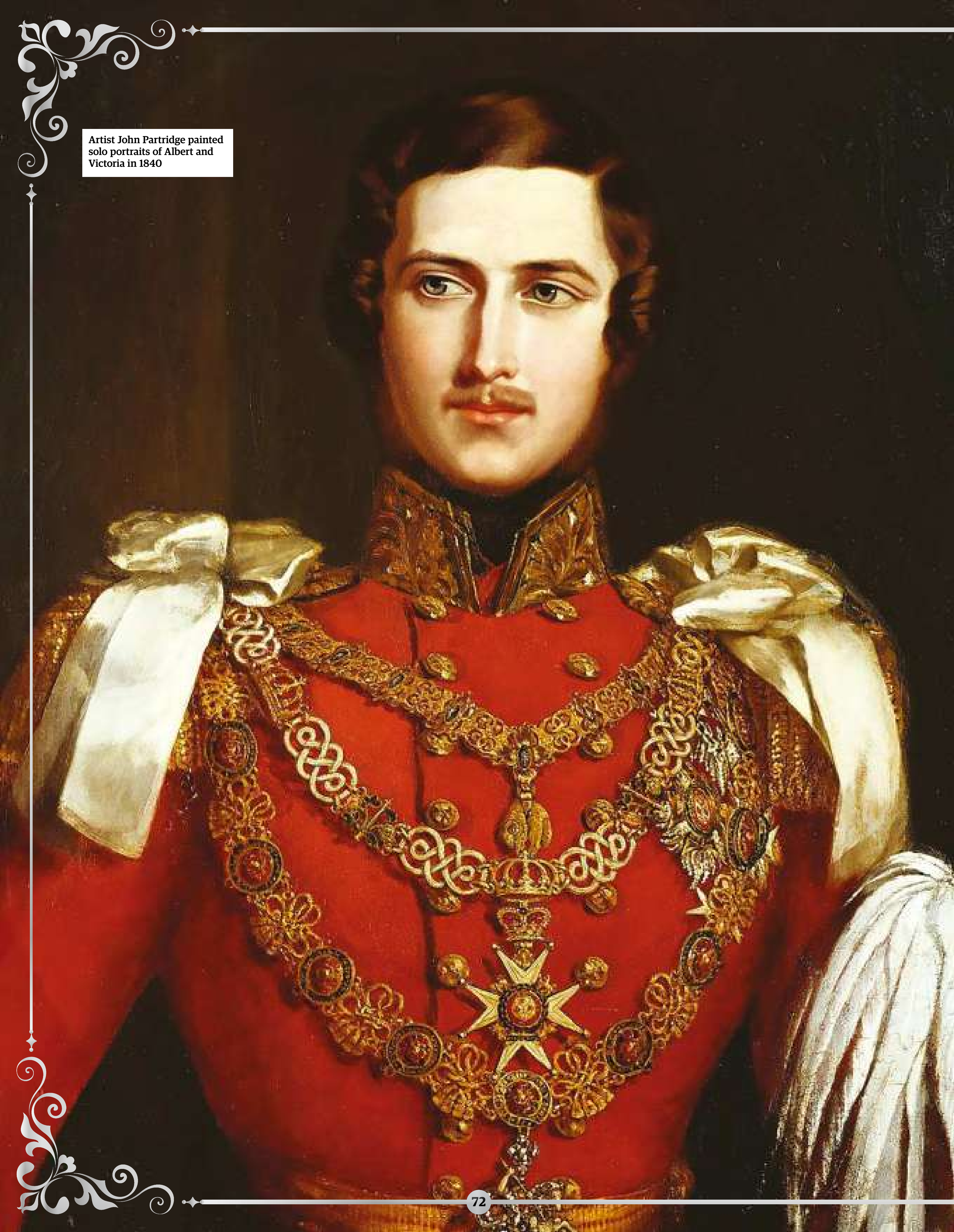
> "Victoria strove to influence domestic and foreign policy from the 1840s onwards, intervening when necessary"

As time went by, Victoria slowly got back into the stride of state affairs, pushing for the construction of the South Kensington museums, participating in discussions about army reform, and cheering on the expansion of the British Empire. She was also deeply interested in relations with Prussia, and cautioned her ministers against waging war with the state.

When Conservative Benjamin Disraeli became prime minister in 1868, and again in 1874, he formed a close bond with the queen. For the next six years, the duo would exploit their closeness for mutual advantage. Victoria had long wished to have an imperial title that reflected Britain's increased stature in the world. The title Empress of India had been used informally with regard to Victoria, and Disraeli succeeded in passing the Royal Titles Bill through the House of Commons. Though the Representation of the People Act of 1884 helped to give the Commons the upper hand, in the colonies the sovereign remained a powerful figure, with many believing that it was the 'Great White Queen' who controlled their fates.

Victoria's relationship with Disraeli's rival, the Liberal William Gladstone, was stony. He was prime minister four times between 1868 and 1894. Her final prime minister, the Tory Lord Salisbury, was much more amenable, and upon her death in 1901 he credited her for the country's rising wealth, civic order and the growth of the Empire. As the queen had so firmly believed, the prime minister was merely the temporary head of the cabinet, while the monarch was the permanent premier. It was a belief that, in the years following her reign, the monarchy would be forced to abandon.

© Alamy; Getty



Artist John Partridge painted solo portraits of Albert and Victoria in 1840

ALBERT, PRINCE CONSORT

From German 'pauper prince' to the most powerful man in England

Words **Jodie Tyley**

"Oh! Was ever woman so blessed as I am," Victoria happily wrote after her wedding day in February 1840. Her first cousin and groom, the dashing Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, had won her heart. It was unfortunate that the public, press and parliament didn't feel the same way. In Britain, fears of foreign influence and anti-German feeling were rife, long before World War One.

Germany was not a country at that time, but rather a collection of principalities, and Albert was seen as a penniless royal immigrant, unbefitting of the queen of the world's largest empire. Indeed, when Victoria asked parliament for an income for her future husband "suitable to the rank of the Prince and the dignity of the Crown", they were reluctant to offer Albert an allowance, let alone a title. In the end he was granted a much smaller sum than previous sovereign spouses and not a penny was to be paid until the day of the wedding. The formal title of Prince Consort, however, wasn't granted until 17 years later in 1857 – four years before his death.

The German prince was mocked by the media – one cartoon painted him as a gold-digger, 'shutting up the sausage shop' because he was about to 'jump into a splendid fortune'. Meanwhile his wedding day outfit only gave them more food for thought. Royal tradition dictated that he must wear English military regalia on the big day, so a tailor fashioned a Field Marshal outfit. However, for a 20-year-old with no military experience, this was quite a jump in rank. One caricature showed Albert on a rocking horse, dressed in his uniform.

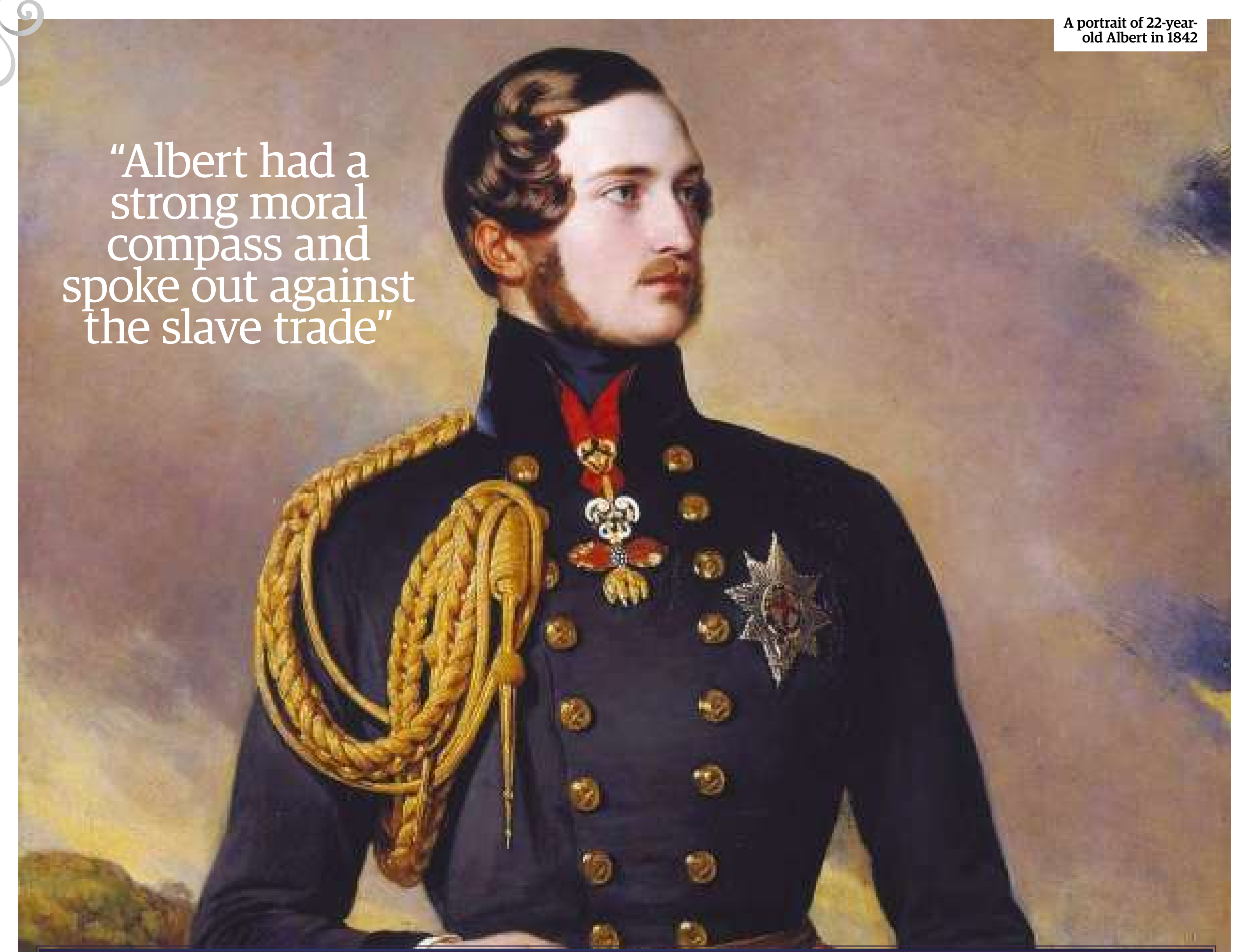
Despite his lack of experience, however, Albert was an armchair strategist and made several recommendations to the commander-in-chief of the army, the Duke of Wellington. He was instrumental in banning duelling in the military which, he argued, caused unnecessary casualties. He also proposed the establishment of new training grounds, which he had seen as a teenager in Germany, but was shocked to find that Britain had no such equivalent. This vision would eventually become Aldershot in 1854 – a garrison town that is still home to the army today.

While the public dismissed this as interfering, the Duke of Wellington came to see Albert as efficient and enterprising. So when the time came to give up the position of commander-in-chief, he suggested that the prince should be his successor. It was such a tempting offer that Albert agreed to consider, but would English troops answer to a German leader? And how would he balance his private ambition with his constitutional position?

Resolved, he wrote a letter to the duke explaining that his unique role requires him to "sink his own individual existence in that of his wife – to aim at no power by himself or for himself – to shun all ostentation – to assume no separate responsibility before the public – to make his position entirely a part of hers." However, knowing this did not make the situation any easier. He was an ambitious man in patriarchal society and confided his frustrations to a friend in Germany: "In my whole life I am very happy and contented but the difficulty in filling my place with proper dignity is that I am only a husband and not master of the house."

Part of his duty as consort was to secure the succession to the throne and every time Victoria fell pregnant, he enjoyed a more active role as Sovereign surrogate. Sure enough, as he turned down the duke's offer, Victoria was expecting her seventh child who happened to be born on the same day as Wellington's 81st birthday. They named him Arthur, in his honour, and the duke became his godfather. The couple eventually had nine children together: four boys and five girls, so Albert had plenty of opportunities to exert his influence during Victoria's confinement.

He effectively became the queen's private secretary – the most powerful man in England – with access to government papers and her private audiences with ministers. Following his example she disassociated herself with the Whig party to elevate herself above party politics, as was expected of a monarch. She also began to take an interest in social welfare issues such as child labour, with Albert's encouragement. Shocked at the state of working-class conditions, he had put together a plan to improve the education of children, provide better housing, and grant allotments and savings banks for workers who had no pensions. "I shall never cease to



A portrait of 22-year-old Albert in 1842

> "Albert had a strong moral compass and spoke out against the slave trade"

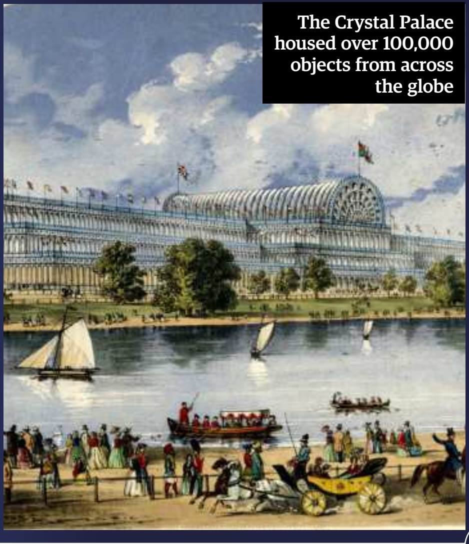
ALBERT'S GREAT EXHIBITION

Whirring steam engines, a cursed diamond and a taxidermy elephant - just some of the curious objects on display at The Great Exhibition of 1851, the first international showcase of inventions and technology. It was such a spectacle that Queen Victoria was most amused, as she wrote in her diary: "The tremendous cheering, the joy expressed in every face, the vastness of the building, with all its decoration and exhibits... all this was indeed moving." The monarch may have been a little biased, however, as her husband Prince Albert was at the heart of the Exhibition's development.

London's Hyde Park became the setting for the ambitious project and an enormous Crystal Palace was constructed, so-called because 300,000 sheets of glass were used. It spanned an area the size of 14 football pitches and towered over 30 metres (100 feet) high so that trees could be left to grow inside the building - it was an engineering marvel. But what lay inside was sure to astound.

Britain and her Empire filled half the space with manufactured goods, from silk and surgical instruments, to a huge hydraulic press that had lifted thousands of tons worth of metal tubes to build the Britannia Bridge. Among the machinery on display were power-driven looms that spun yarn, industrial cotton-spinners and a printer that could spit out 5,000 copies of *The Illustrated London News* in an hour. Visitors could see the mechanisms at work - a demonstration of British industrial prowess. In the other half of the Crystal Palace lay wonders from the rest of the world. France sent tapestries, silks from Lyons and the finest Sèvres porcelain. The American section was dominated by an eagle and featured Samuel Colt's firearms.

By the time the Great Exhibition closed in October, over 6 million people had visited. Today, there is little left of the original structure, but the lasting legacy of The Great Exhibition ensures it still inspires and educates for generations to come.



The Crystal Palace housed over 100,000 objects from across the globe promote these four objectives wherever and whenever I can," he vowed.

Albert had a strong moral compass and also spoke out against the slave trade, calling it "a stain upon civilised Europe". In this public address – the first he had given since his marriage – was met with rapturous applause. A letter to his father revealed the "fear and nervousness" he had to conquer before delivering the speech. "I composed it myself, and then learned it by heart, for it is always difficult to speak in a foreign language before five or six thousand eager listeners."

Some of his actions, however, became lost in translation. In 1842, horrified by the conditions of starving silk workers in Spitalfields, Albert organised a grand costume ball at Buckingham Palace in a bid to bolster the failing industry. All the guests were asked to come dressed in their finest silk gowns for an evening of lavish entertainment – a poorly misjudged, if well-meaning gesture.

Like his wife, Albert was a passionate patron of art and design. They would often gift each other paintings and sculptures for birthdays and anniversaries, and the talented duo even created their own pieces – over 500 of the prince's works are still in the Royal Collection. He chaired the committee in charge of the interior decoration of the new Palace of Westminster in the 1840s, and also supervised the design of personal projects alongside his public duties. These included alterations to Balmoral in Scotland and Osborne House on the Isle of Wight.

The latter became the royal family's second home and its unique features tell us a little about the man behind them. Take the Swiss Cottage, for example, hidden in the grounds. This wooden chalet was built for the children to play at being grown-ups. Everything was built at three-quarter scale, including a working kitchen, a museum where they collected natural history specimens, and gardens where they grew fruit and vegetables. They

5 THINGS YOU (PROBABLY) DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT ALBERT

The Prince Consort was a fascinating figure in his own right

He didn't smoke

Victoria hated the smell of tobacco so Albert didn't smoke, which was unusual for a man of his rank at the time. He had a separate billiard room where he could take gentlemen who wanted to smoke.

He spoke German in private

Away from the public eye Albert spoke in his mother tongue. Victoria grew up speaking the language, as her mother and governess both came from Germany.

He made Christmas trees a popular custom

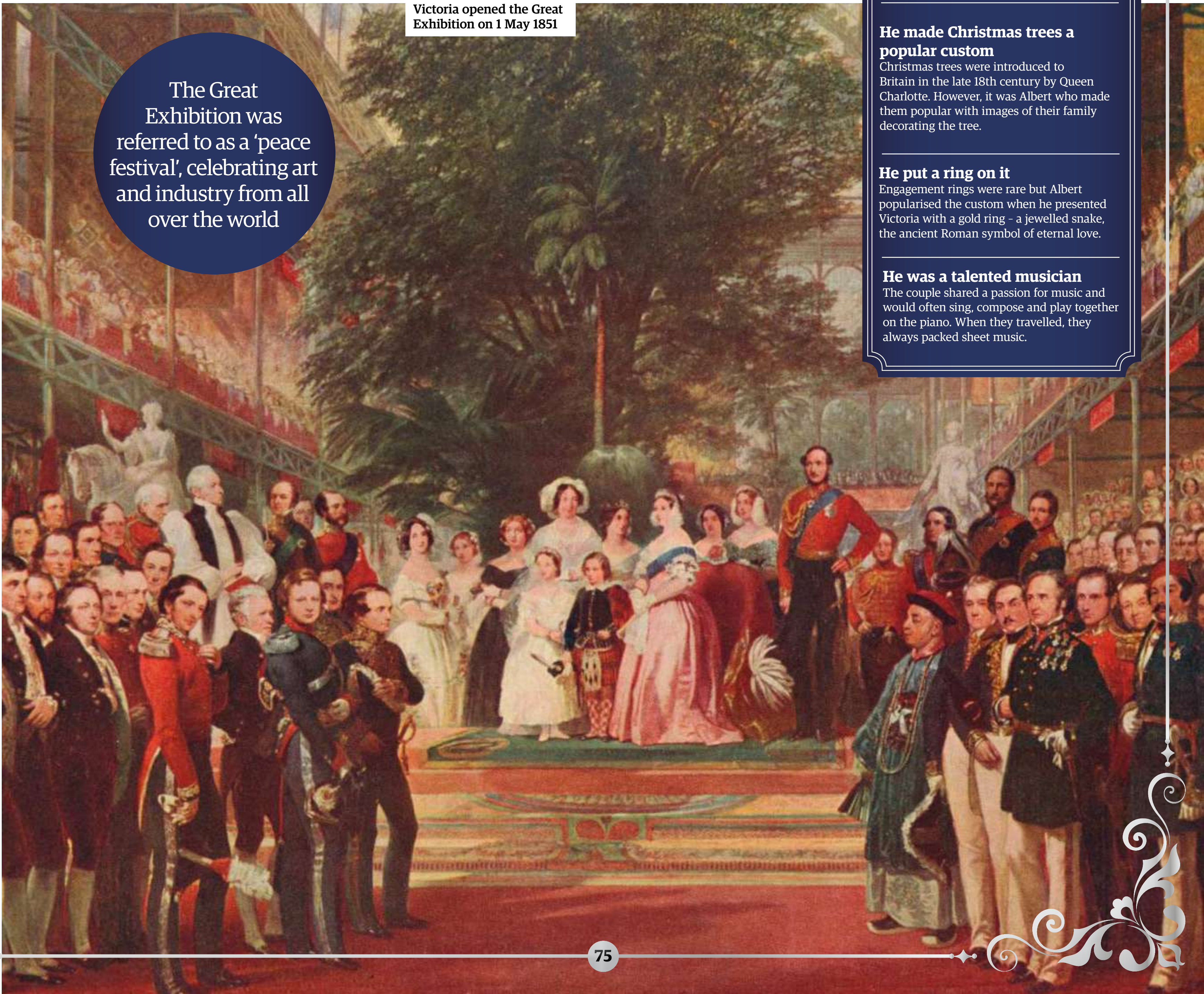
Christmas trees were introduced to Britain in the late 18th century by Queen Charlotte. However, it was Albert who made them popular with images of their family decorating the tree.

He put a ring on it

Engagement rings were rare but Albert popularised the custom when he presented Victoria with a gold ring – a jewelled snake, the ancient Roman symbol of eternal love.

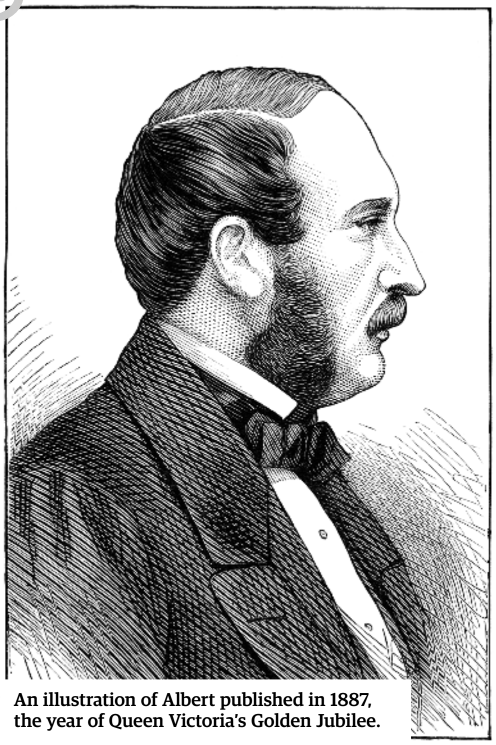
He was a talented musician

The couple shared a passion for music and would often sing, compose and play together on the piano. When they travelled, they always packed sheet music.

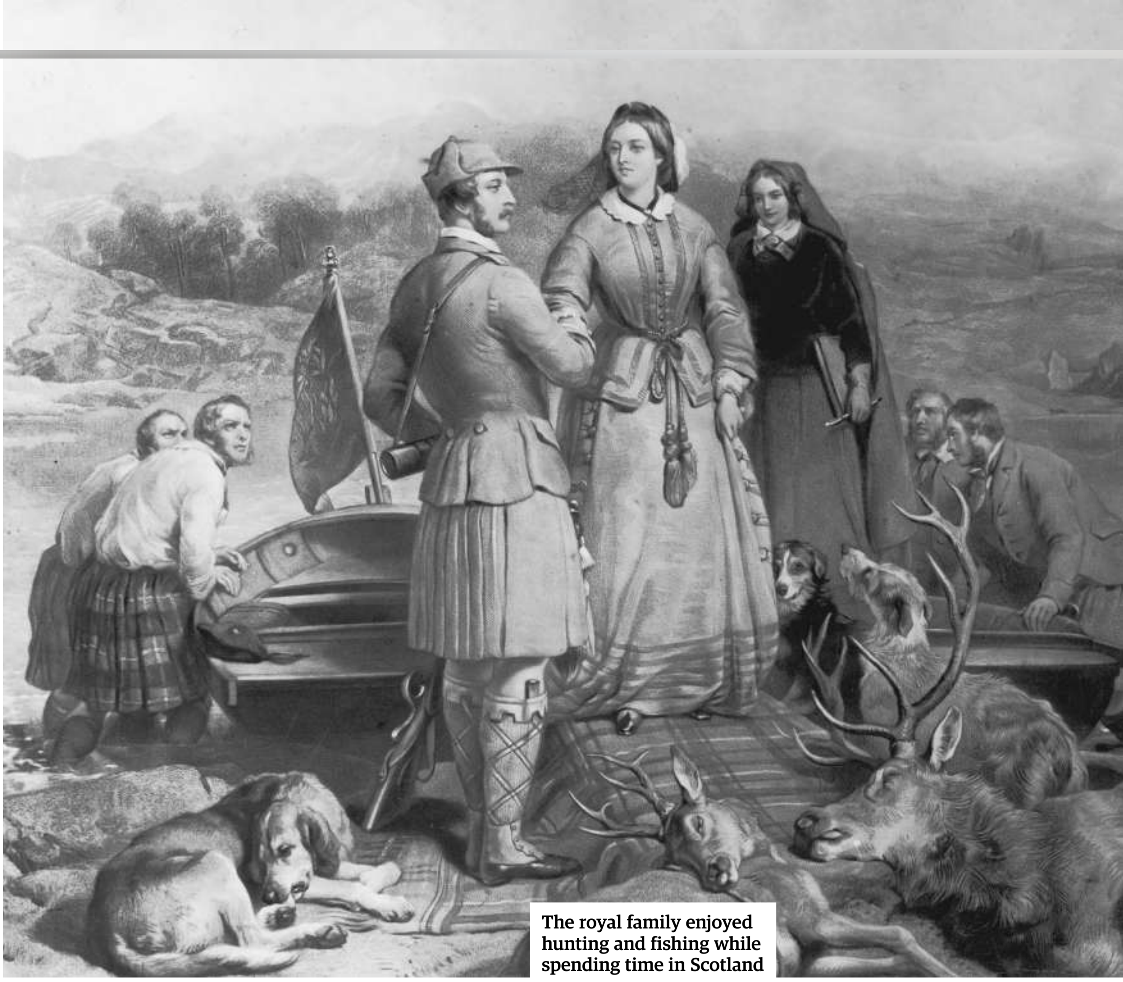


Victoria opened the Great Exhibition on 1 May 1851

The Great Exhibition was referred to as a 'peace festival', celebrating art and industry from all over the world



An illustration of Albert published in 1887, the year of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee.



The royal family enjoyed hunting and fishing while spending time in Scotland

even ran a toy grocer's shop and kept accounts for their father to check. All of this, he believed, would equip them with the skills and knowledge they needed for adulthood.

Education was important to Albert and he had been tutored alongside his older brother, Ernest II, from a young age. Their father allegedly once said: "My children cannot misbehave, and they know of themselves that they must learn something in order to become able men, so I don't trouble myself further about them." The duke, Ernest I, married their mother Louise when he was in his thirties and she was only 16 years old. They had two children, but it was rumoured that Ernest I had fathered many more. However, when court gossip accused Louise of adultery, he divorced her and sent her to live in Switzerland. Albert was only seven at the time. "Parting from my children was the worst thing of all," she wrote. "The poor little mice, may god bless them!" They never saw their mother again but it seems that Albert never forgot her, christening one of his daughters Louise.

Albert wasn't just concerned with his children's education. In 1847 he was elected Chancellor of Cambridge University where he helped to modernise the curriculum. Mathematics and classics were supplemented by moral sciences including history, philosophy and law, as well as natural sciences. He even founded the institution that went on to become Imperial College in London - the first British university dedicated to scientific research. It was a period when medical, scientific and technological knowledge was advancing rapidly and Albert thought it was time to show off on the global stage.

The Prince Consort's full German name was Franz Albert August Karl Emanuel of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha

The Great Exhibition of 1851 was to be his greatest triumph - the first international display of design and manufacturing. Visitors were in awe, including A-list attendees Charles Dickens, Lewis Carroll and Charlotte Brontë. "It is a wonderful place," said the author of Jane Eyre, "vast, strange, new, and impossible to describe." Albert had won over even his harshest critics and Britain's industrial might was laid for the entire world to see. On his orders, the profits were used to "increase the means of industrial education and extend the influence of science and art upon productive industry." Land was purchased in South Kensington and a complex of museums was established, now known as the Victoria and Albert, Natural History and Science museums; the Royal Albert Hall; Imperial College and the Royal Colleges of Art and Music.

In his 21 years as Prince Consort, Albert did much for his adoptive country - but this paled in comparison to how much he did for Victoria, as her devoted husband, father of her children, confidante

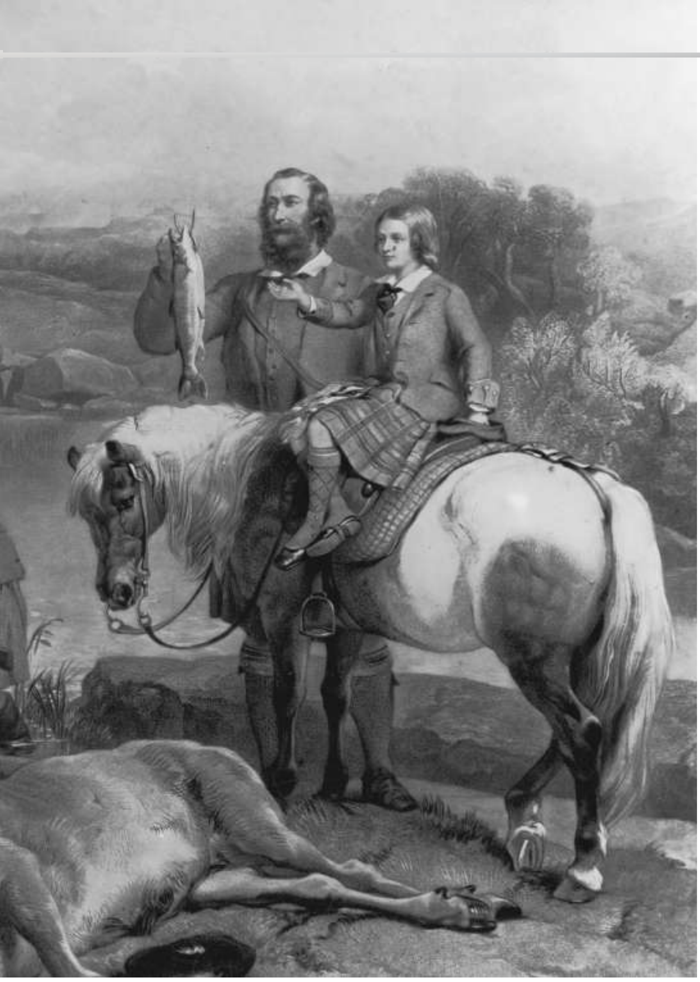
Timeline of Albert's life

26 August 1819
Francis Albert Augustus Charles Emmanuel is born in Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld.

15 October 1839
Victoria proposes to Albert. Since she was the queen, he couldn't propose to her.

10 February 1840
20-year-old Prince Albert marries Queen Victoria at Chapel Royal in St James's Palace, London.

1840-1857
Victoria and Albert have nine children – four boys and five girls.

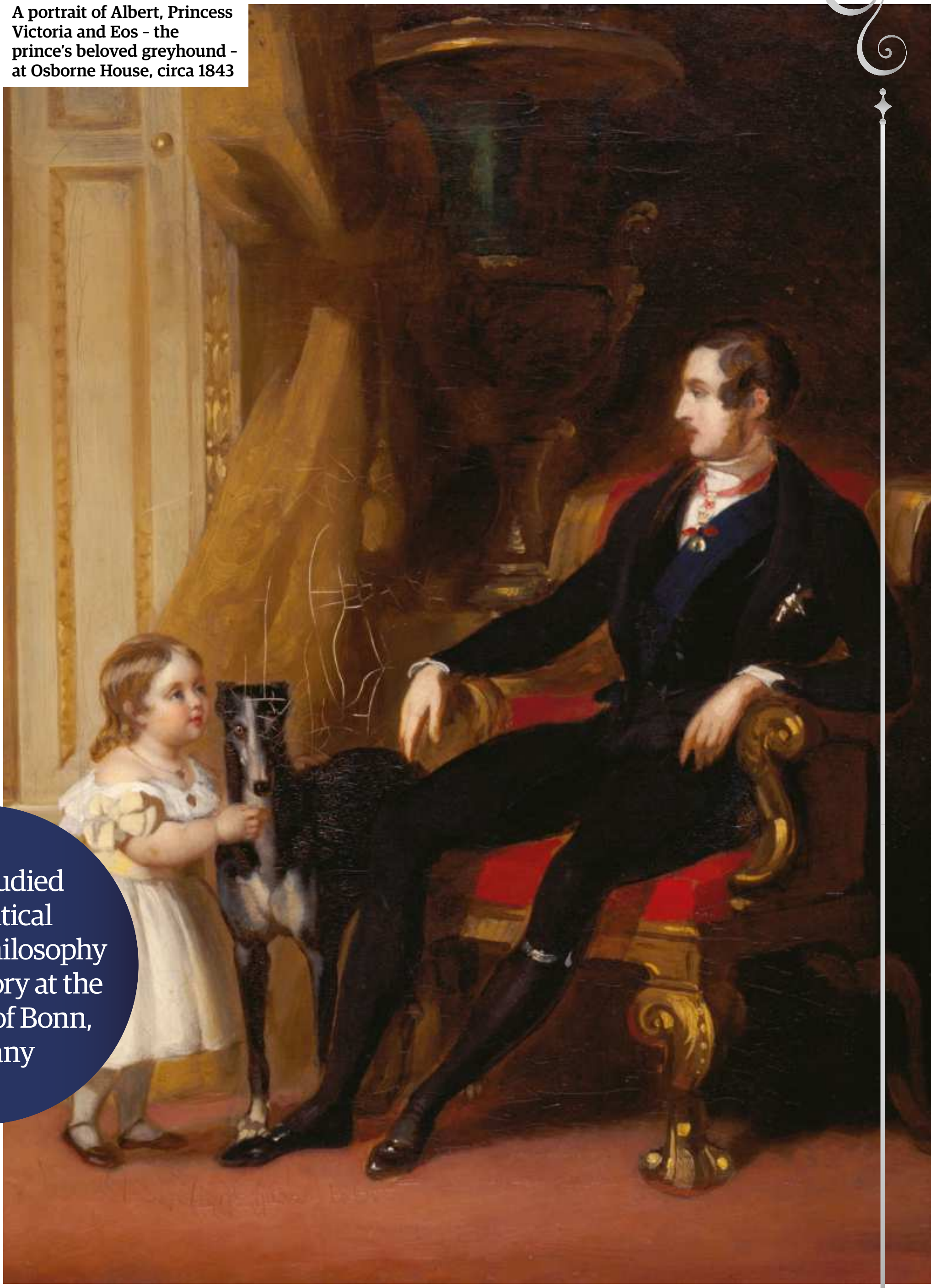


and advisor. On their wedding anniversary in February 1861 he said of their marriage: “How many a storm has swept over it and still it continues green and fresh, and throws out green shoots, from which I can acknowledge that much good will yet be engendered for this world.” Sadly it would be there last together.

When he died suddenly on 14 December 1861, aged 42, Victoria was plunged into turmoil, withdrawing from the public eye and wearing black for the remaining 40 years of her life. Albert had been suffering from an illness that doctors diagnosed as typhoid fever, but still he served his queen and country with his final act. When tensions were high between Britain and America, Albert interceded to help reach a diplomatic solution and avoid war. Following his death two weeks later, Prime Minister Palmerston said: “Better for England to have had a ten years’ war with America than to have lost Prince Albert.” He was gone, but his specter loomed large over the monarchy for decades to come.

> Albert studied law, political economy, philosophy and art history at the University of Bonn, Germany

A portrait of Albert, Princess Victoria and Eos - the prince’s beloved greyhound - at Osborne House, circa 1843



● **1848**
Albert oversees the demolishing of the old Osborne House and helps to design the new one.

● **1851**
The Great Exhibition, created and championed by Albert, is a great success.

● **25 June 1857**
HRH Prince Albert is given the title Prince Consort, 17 years after the wedding.

● **14 December 1861**
After falling ill, Albert dies at Windsor Castle, at the age of 42.

© Getty; Alamy

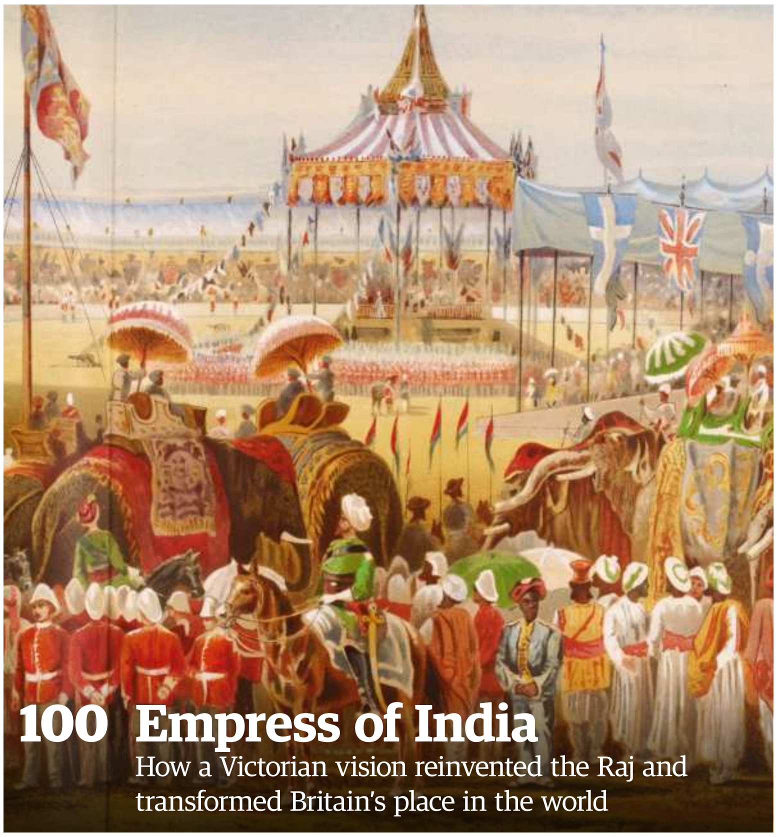
LONG LIVE THE QUEEN

80 Victoria's diaries
The queen's journals provide a unique insight into the life of a monarch

86 "We are not amused"
Discover the myths and misconceptions that surround Victoria to this day

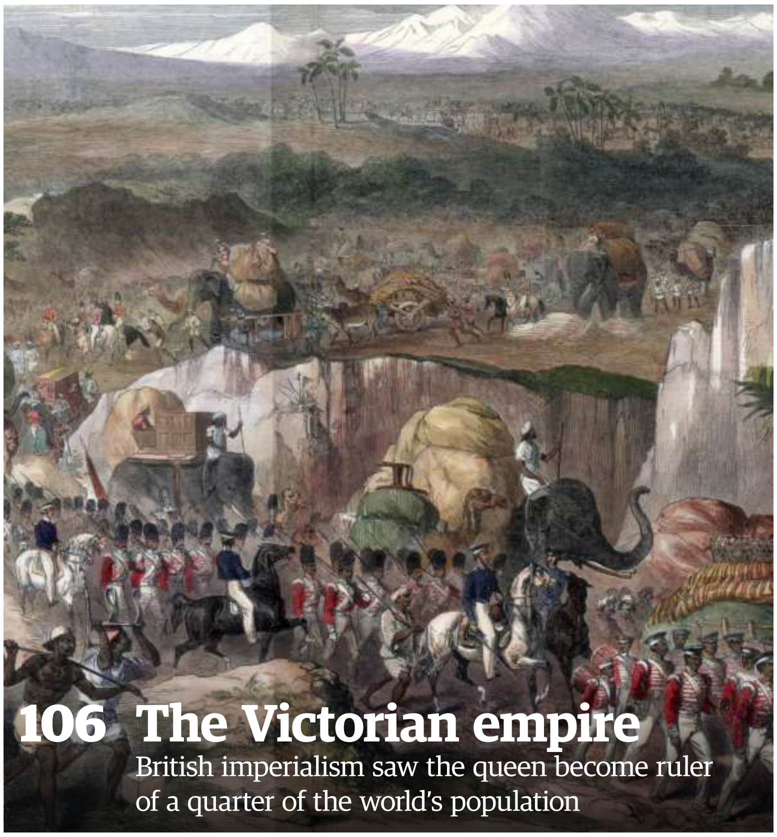
90 Victoria's secrets
Discover the stories behind the scandals that marred her majesty's reign

96 The widow of Windsor
Heartbroken by Albert's death, the queen withdrew from public life



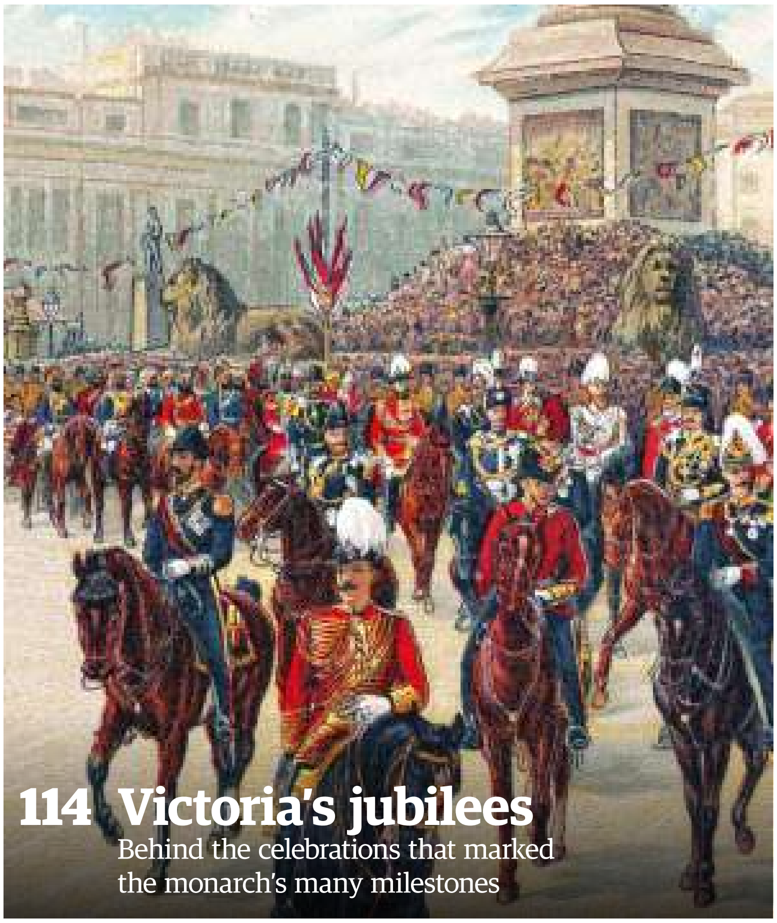
100 Empress of India

How a Victorian vision reinvented the Raj and transformed Britain's place in the world



106 The Victorian empire

British imperialism saw the queen become ruler of a quarter of the world's population



114 Victoria's jubilees

Behind the celebrations that marked the monarch's many milestones

118 The end of an era

How the British Empire mourned their queen after her record-breaking reign

From adolescence to death, the queen faithfully kept her journal

VICTORIA'S DIARIES

Queen Victoria's extensive journals offer a unique insight into the private life of the monarch

Words **Catherine Curzon**

Princess Victoria of Kent was just 13 years old when she wrote the first words in her journal, beginning a habit that was to last until the very end of her life.

The diaries are a priceless record of the queen's daily life and a unique opportunity to understand not only the monarch's personality, but the times in which she lived. In almost 44,000 pages she describes her meetings with the great and good, the state of the nation and the government of her day. Occupying 141 volumes, through these diaries Queen Victoria's own words and feelings are revealed. Her journals offer historians, scholars and readers an opportunity to experience Victorian Britain through the eyes of the woman who ruled for more than six decades.

Though posthumously edited by her daughter, Princess Beatrice, at Victoria's instruction, they remain one of the Victorian era's most remarkable royal resources.

FIRST ENTRY

When Princess Victoria of Kent received a journal as a gift from her mother, the Duchess of Kent, she was just 13 years old. This was the first line she wrote in what would eventually become more than 140 volumes.

2 AUGUST 1832

"This book, Mamma gave me, that I might write the journal of my journey to Wales in it."

20 JUNE 1837

"At 9 came Lord Melbourne, whom I saw in my room, and of course quite alone as I shall always do all my Ministers. He kissed my hand and I then acquainted him that it had long been my intention to retain him and the rest of the present Ministry at the head of affairs, and that it could not be in better hands than his. He again then kissed my hand. [...] I like him very much and feel confidence in him. He is a very straightforward, honest, clever and good man"

RECEIVING THE PRIME MINISTER

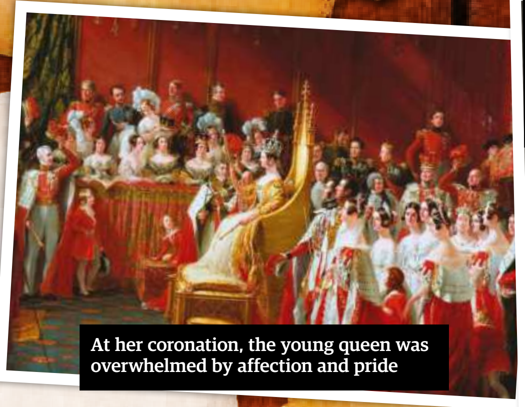
On the morning that 18-year-old Victoria became queen, the prime minister, Lord Melbourne, arrived for their first audience. Melbourne became a valuable political mentor to the new monarch and the two spent hours together each day. She came to regard him as a father figure, in whom she had utmost trust and respect.

13 JULY 1837

"I go into Buckingham Palace today. [...] am much pleased with my rooms. They are high, pleasant and cheerful. Arranged things. [...] I then walked round the garden (which is large and very pretty), with Mamma. Dear Dashy was quite happy in it."

A MOVE TO BUCKINGHAM PALACE

Victoria hadn't been on the throne for a month before she moved to Buckingham Palace in the company of her mother and her adored dog, Dash. She was the first monarch to make the palace her London residence, establishing the tradition that continues today.



At her coronation, the young queen was overwhelmed by affection and pride

Far from being prudish and reserved, in private Victoria and Albert were deeply in love

28 JUNE 1838

"I was awoke at four o'clock by the guns in the Park, and could not get much sleep afterwards on account of the noise of the people, bands [...] It was a fine day; and the crowds of people exceeded what I have ever seen; many as there were, the day I went to the City, it was nothing – nothing to the multitudes, the millions of my loyal subjects who were assembled in every spot to witness the Procession. Their good-humour and excessive loyalty was beyond everything, and I really cannot say how proud I feel to be the Queen of such a Nation."

THE CORONATION

The young queen's coronation was unlike anything she had seen in her sheltered childhood yet she navigated the complicated traditions with aplomb, unlike the confused Archbishop who conducted them. She retired to bed after midnight, after a day of exhausting yet exhilarating pageantry.

10 FEBRUARY 1840

"[Albert] clasped me in his arms, and we kissed each other again and again! His beauty, his sweetness and gentleness, really how can I ever be thankful enough to have such a Husband! [...] we both went to bed; (of course in one bed), to lie by his side, and in his arms, and on his dear bosom, and be called by names of tenderness, I have never yet heard used to me before – was bliss beyond belief! Oh! this was the happiest day of my life! May God help me to do my duty as I ought and be worthy of such blessings!"

THE WEDDING NIGHT

Queen Victoria was smitten with Prince Albert from the day they met to the day of his death and beyond, and her account of their wedding night is tender and affectionate. This was no loveless dynastic marriage, but a true case of soulmates.

1 DECEMBER 1840

"Baby was on the way and everything was all right. We both expressed joy that the event was at hand, and I did not feel at all nervous. After a good many hours suffering, a perfect little child was born at 2 in the afternoon, but alas! A girl and not a boy, as we both had so hoped and wished for. We were, I am afraid, sadly disappointed, but yet our hearts were full of gratitude, for God having brought me safely through my ordeal, and having such a strong, healthy child."

THE BIRTH OF A CHILD

Victoria's first child, also named Victoria, was born on 21 November 1840, but she didn't record the event until over a week later. Though she was happy to have safely delivered her firstborn, the child was a girl, not a male heir, a source of some disappointment for the new parents.

9 NOVEMBER 1841

"At last, [...] I gave birth to a fine large boy. Oh! how happy, how grateful did I feel to that Almighty Providence Who has so greatly blessed me and preserved me so mercifully through so many dangers and trials. Though tired and shaken, I felt very well, once the child was there. It was taken to the Ministers for them to see, and I only saw it after it was dressed again."

THE BIRTH OF AN HEIR

Victoria's second child was a boy, Edward, born on 9 November 1841. She had finally fulfilled her duty and given the nation an heir, who was swiftly whisked away to be shown off!

25 NOVEMBER 1848

"Saw in the papers that my poor dear friend Lord Melbourne was no more, and that he had breathed his last yesterday. Truly and seriously do I deplore the loss of one who was a most kind [...] friend of mine and most sincerely attached to me. He was indeed for the first 2 years and a half of my reign almost the only friend [...] that I had. I used to see him constantly, daily and now he is no more. I thought much and talked much of him all day."

THE DEATH OF MELBOURNE

The loss of Melbourne hit Victoria hard. Once her mentor, their correspondence had dwindled over concerns that their friendship might be misconstrued as inappropriate. He resigned as prime minister in 1841 but continued to be active in politics for the rest of his days.

28 SEPTEMBER 1853

"The sun shone brightly for the ceremony of laying the Foundation Stone of the new house [...] We walked round to the spot, followed by the whole Household and preceded by McKay, playing the Pipes. We took up our places at the south side of the stone, where Mr Anderson stood, and offered up an appropriate Prayer and gave the Blessing, I spread the mortar and the stone was lowered, when I struck it with the mallet and declared it well and truly laid. I also poured corn oil and wine upon the corner coppice, and then we left."

LAYING THE BALMORAL FOUNDATION STONE

When the queen laid the foundation stone at Balmoral, it began a relationship with Scotland that has endured with the royal family ever since. The castle was completed in 1856 and Victoria adored the sanctuary it offered her.

17 JANUARY 1855

"[The Light Brigade] charged for 3/4 of a mile, down a hill, fired upon in every direction, from the batteries, taken from the Turks, and by Riflemen, the only exception being on their flank. In this way they lost many men, before the actual Charge began. They only numbered 700 and the Russian Cavalry, opposed to them, 5000, besides Field Batteries. In spite of this they had sabred all the gunners, 1/2 put the Russian Cavalry into great confusion, killing a great number, so that the Light Brigade was not pursued, as it ought to have been done."

CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

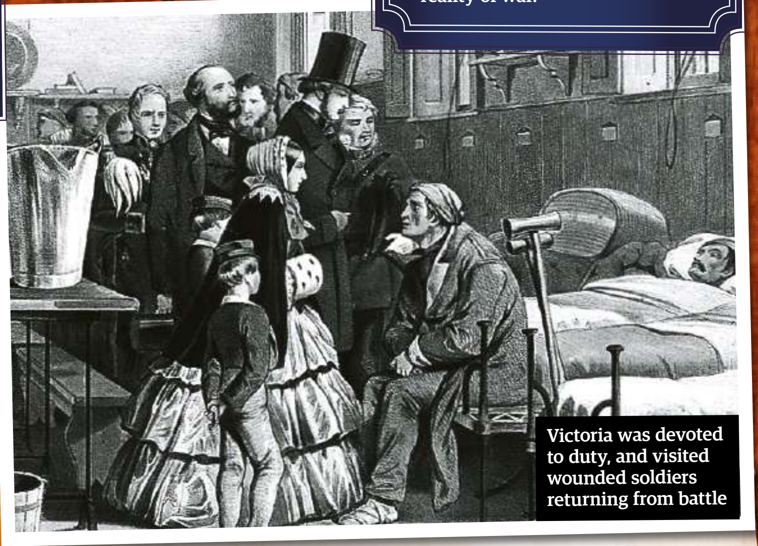
The Charge of the Light Brigade is one of the most infamous episodes of the Crimean War so it's unsurprising that Victoria would refer to it in her diaries. She was one of thousands in Britain who were discussing the ill-fated charge.

3 MARCH 1855

"Chatham [...] to visit the Military Hospital there. I was anxious to inspect the arrangements made for the poor suffering men, who have returned from the Crimea. This visit was an intensely interesting, touching, and gratifying one to me, and I wish I could pay constant visits of this kind to the Hospitals and tend and cheer these noble, brave, patient men!"

MEETING THE TROOPS

The returning, wounded soldiers of the Crimean War brought the reality of the conflict home to Britain and Queen Victoria was anxious to meet them. She spent the day with casualties, listening to their stories and learning the reality of war.


Victoria was devoted to duty, and visited wounded soldiers returning from battle

27 JANUARY 1859

"[Vicky's ongoing labour] greatly agitated me. After luncheon came the welcome eagerly expected news, in a telegram from Sir J Clark: "All is happily over. The Princess as well as can be, the young Prince also". [...] All the Household, servants, everyone delighted. Ran back to send numberless telegrams, to Berlin and to relations. Wrote a hurried letter to dear Fritz, and afterwards walked down to Frogmore, and found Mama overjoyed. Truly grateful and happy, relieved from a great weight, which we would not acknowledge, but which had pressed upon us both from morning till night. God is most merciful to us!"

THE BIRTH OF A GRANDCHILD

Having feared for her daughter's health throughout her pregnancy, when Vicky gave birth to her first child without incident, the queen was overcome with relief. That little boy grew up to be a monarch himself, as Kaiser Wilhelm II.

16 MARCH 1861

"The dreaded terrible calamity has befallen us, which seems like an awful dream, from which I cannot recover. My precious darling Mother has been taken from us this morning at 1/2 p. 9, peacefully, painlessly. She breathed her last, my hand holding hers to the last moment. What a blessed end!"

DEATH OF THE DUCHESS

The Duchess of Kent's death brought to an end a relationship between mother and daughter that had once been so strained as to be virtually estranged. Long since reconciled, Victoria felt the loss of her surviving parent keenly.

1 JANUARY 1862

"Have been unable to write my Journal since the day my beloved one left us, and with what a heavy broken heart I enter on a new year without him! My dreadful and overwhelming calamity gives me so much to do, that I must henceforth merely keep notes of my sad and solitary life."

PRINCE ALBERT'S DEATH

Prince Albert's death on 14 December 1861 had a profound impact on Queen Victoria and she mourned him for the rest of her days, taking on the mantle of a dour-faced monarch, which remains her most enduring public image.

20 JUNE 1873

"Felt nervous and agitated at the great event of the day, the Shah's visit [...] the Shah was said to be nervous at the meeting with me."

MEETING THE SHAH

Though she had hosted glittering receptions for overseas leaders during Albert's lifetime, Victoria abandoned them after his death. Her anxiety at welcoming the visiting Shah of Persia is therefore not as surprising as it might seem. In fact the Shah proved to be a tonic and she delighted in his company.

19 MARCH 1883

"A good night, Dressed on the sofa. Brown so attentive, helping me on and off the sofa."

A FAITHFUL RETAINER

John Brown was Victoria's faithful servant and became a rock after the death of Albert, never more so than during her periods of ill health. There were plenty of rumours about the queen's relationship with the Scot, including unproven claims of a clandestine marriage!

The queen's close relationship with Abdul Karim, the Munshi, raised eyebrows

30 AUGUST 1887

"Abdul has returned from India, from his holiday, and I am very glad to have him back and be able to work at my Hindustani again with him."

LEARNING A NEW LANGUAGE

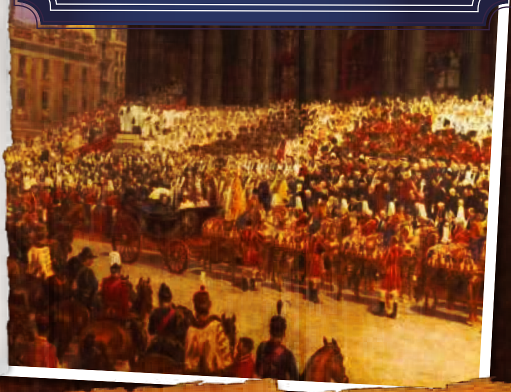
Victoria enjoyed a singular relationship with Abdul Karim, an Indian Muslim who joined her staff as a servant and was promoted to Indian secretary, known as Munshi. He taught the queen Urdu and their closeness caused some jealousy among the household.

20 JUNE 1897

"This eventful day, 1897, has opened and I pray God to help and protect me as He has hitherto done during these 60 long eventful years! [...] How well I remember this day 60 years ago when I was called from my bed by dear Mama to receive the news of my accession."

THE DIAMOND JUBILEE

Sixty years after she came to the throne, Victoria celebrated her Diamond Jubilee. For the aging queen it was a time not just of celebration, but of reflection on the years that had passed since she first wore the crown.



13 JANUARY 1901

"Had a fair night, but was a little wakeful. Got up earlier and had some milk. Lenchen came and read some papers. Out before 1, in the garden chair, Lenchen and Beatrice going with me. Rested a little, had some food, and took a short drive with Lenchen and Beatrice. Rested when I came in and at 5.30, went down to the Drawing room, where a short service was held, by Mr Clement Smith, who performed it so well, and it was a great comfort to me. Rested again afterwards, then did some signing and dictated to Lenchen."

FINAL ENTRY

Queen Victoria's last entry is that of a woman in her dotage. After spending the day with family she laid down her pen and, stricken by ill health, never picked it up again. She died on 22 January, aged 81, and laid to rest beside her beloved Albert in the Frogmore Mausoleum.

VICTORIAN MYTHS

During and after her long reign, plenty of very persistent gossip stuck to Queen Victoria's name!

Words **Catherine Curzon**

"WE ARE NOT AMUSED"

The quote most attributed to Queen Victoria supposedly happened when the famously dour monarch withered a merry courtier by telling him, "we are not amused." In fact, there's no evidence that she ever said any such thing and with dozens of eyewitness accounts each giving a different version of events, it seems that Queen Victoria never uttered the words and "we are not amused" is, in fact, her version of Marie Antoinette's famously fictional "let them eat cake." Since the quote has also been attributed to Queen Elizabeth I, the truth behind this most famous of sovereign putdowns is likely to remain unknown.

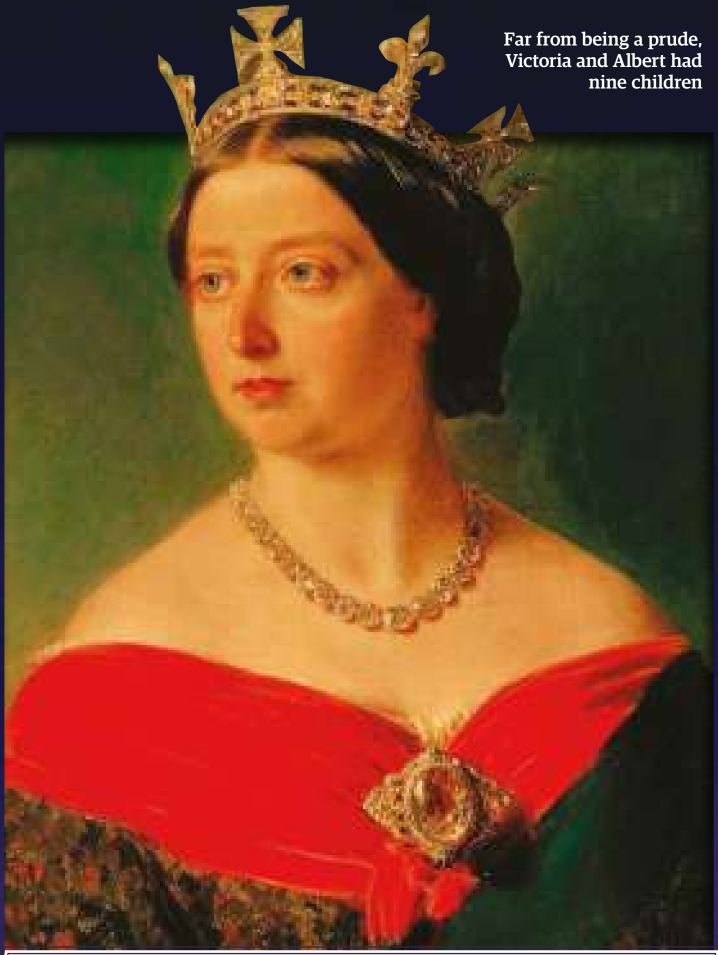
Though famously "not amused", even Victoria smiled from time to time!

> "With dozens of eyewitness accounts each giving a different version of events, it seems that Queen Victoria never uttered the words"

SHE DIDN'T BELIEVE IN LESBIANISM

Legend has it that when a law was passed in 1885 to make homosexuality illegal, the law didn't criminalise lesbianism because Queen Victoria thought that intercourse between two women was physically impossible, so asked for such measures to be removed from the papers before she signed them. Another version of the story claims that all references to lesbianism were deleted before the law was given royal assent, because the politicians were too embarrassed at the thought of having to explain what the term meant to the aging monarch. In fact these stories are both untrue and Victoria had no power to overrule Parliament nor demand that laws be rewritten to suit her personal opinions. This myth actually began in 1977 in Wellington, New Zealand, when demonstrators asking for equality for lesbians gathered at a statue of Victoria and draped it with protest banners.

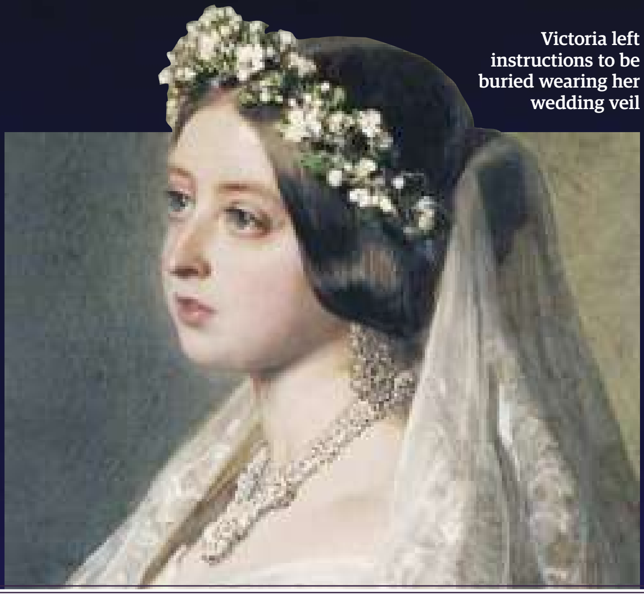
There's no truth to the rumour that Victoria didn't believe in lesbians



Far from being a prude, Victoria and Albert had nine children

"LIE BACK AND THINK OF ENGLAND"

This line, or the similar "close your eyes and think of England", was supposedly the advice given by Queen Victoria to her daughter when she admitted that she was worried about her wedding night. In other versions of the myth, the queen gave the advice when her daughter spoke to her about her fears of childbirth. The phrase was later attributed to a middle-aged noblewoman named Lady Alice Hillingdon, who wrote in her diary, "When I hear his steps outside my door I lie down on my bed, open my legs and think of England." In fact, that supposed diary has never been found and it's more likely that the expression is simply one that was used to poke fun at the prudish Victorian attitude to sex. With the queen's reputation, it's little wonder that it eventually attached itself to her.



Victoria left instructions to be buried wearing her wedding veil

AFTER ALBERT'S DEATH SHE ONLY WORE BLACK

The image of Queen Victoria, with a poker-straight face and an ever-expanding frame swathed in deep mourning black, is one that has endured over the decades. Victoria's lifelong dedication to mourning the death of Prince Albert has defined her in the public consciousness ever since. She outlived him by 40 years and every morning until her own death, had clothes for her deceased husband laid out and water put out for him to shave with, as though he might still walk through the door. She slept next to a picture of Albert and never wore anything but black from that day forward. Yet when Victoria died, she wanted her mourning to end. She left instructions that she was to be buried in white, wearing her wedding veil, ready to be reunited with her love in the hereafter.

SHE HAD AN AFFAIR WITH JOHN BROWN

After she was widowed, Queen Victoria enjoyed an exceptionally close friendship with John Brown, her Scottish personal servant, and some believed they were lovers or even secret spouses. When Brown died she was devastated, and a portrait of Brown was buried with the queen at her death. But there is little evidence to suggest that the couple were anything more than dear friends.

SHE WAS THE DAUGHTER OF A SOLDIER

Queen Victoria's childhood was blighted by the oppressive domestic regime of her mother, the Duchess of Kent, and the Duchess' friend and alleged lover, John Conroy, who was also rumoured to be Victoria's father. The rumours were so widespread that even Wellington believed them, though the queen never acknowledged them.

SHE OFFERED A KNIGHTHOOD FOR FRUIT

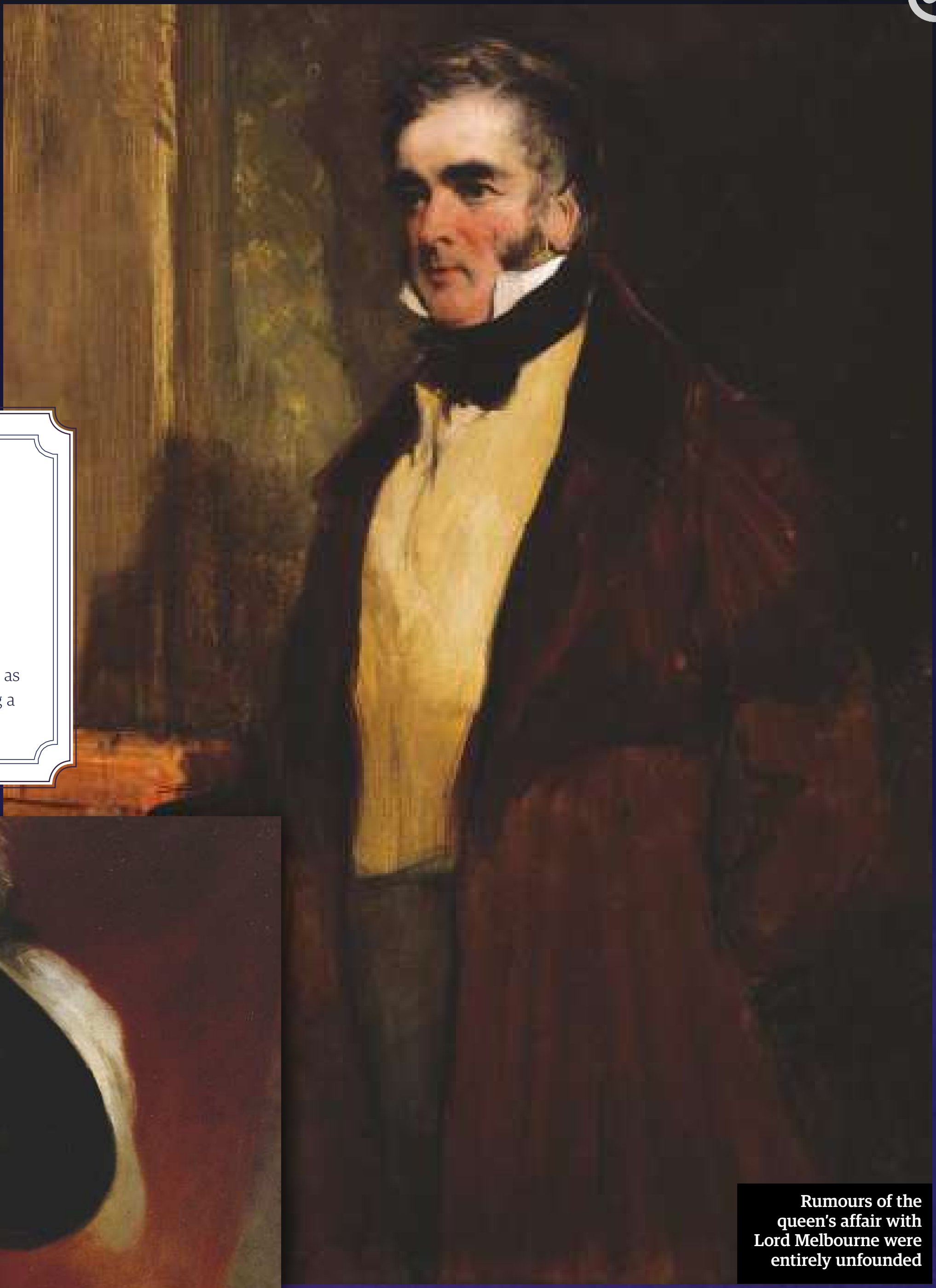
In the mid 20th century, a fruit importer selling mangosteens claimed that the fruit was so tasty and rare that Queen Victoria had offered a knighthood to anyone that could provide them. Sadly this fruity rumour was nothing but a very canny sales tactic!

It's unlikely that Victoria offered a knighthood for a mangosteen

SHE WASN'T A POLITICAL QUEEN

During her early reign and marriage, Queen Victoria was a keenly political monarch, tutored by Lord Melbourne in the arts of Westminster. After Albert's death the queen seemed to lose interest in politics but in fact she was as involved as ever, continually fascinated by political manoeuvres.

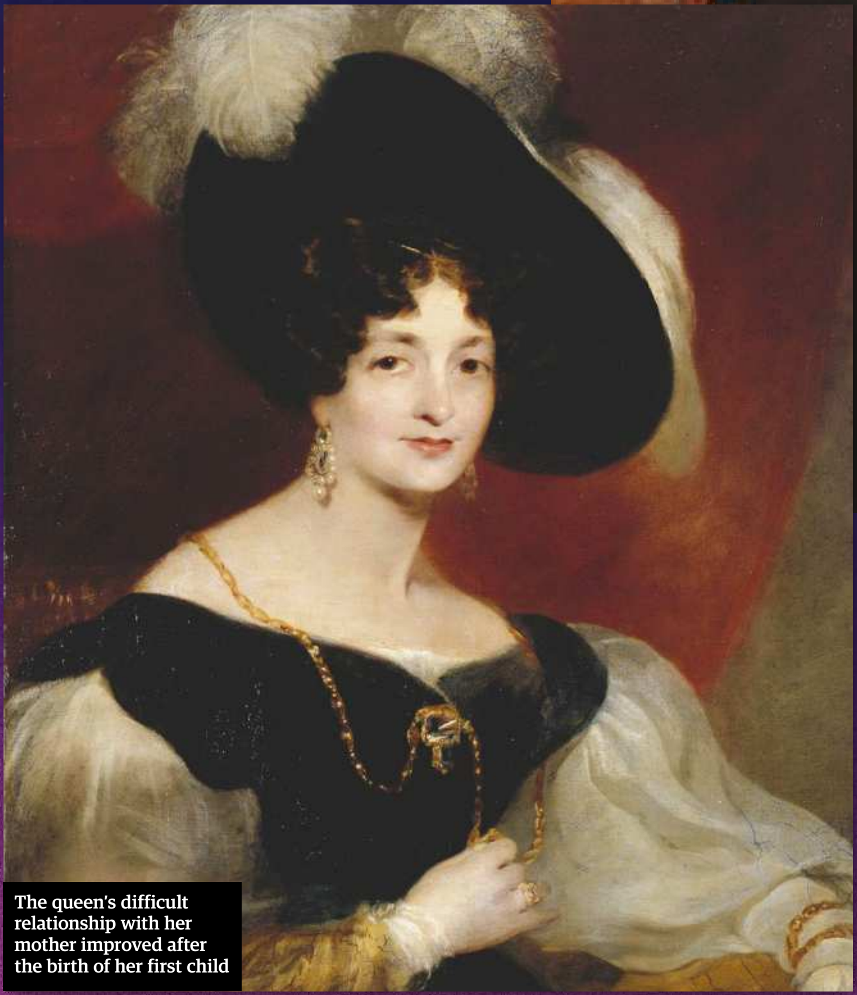
> "After Albert's death the queen seemed to lose interest in politics but she was as involved as ever, fascinated by political manoeuvres"



Rumours of the queen's affair with Lord Melbourne were entirely unfounded

SHE HAD AN AFFAIR WITH THE PRIME MINISTER

Thanks to modern retellings of the queen's life, early rumours that she was the lover of Prime Minister Lord Melbourne have resurfaced. In fact Victoria's relationship with Melbourne began as pupil and mentor and evolved into something more resembling a daughter and father, filling a need for both of them.

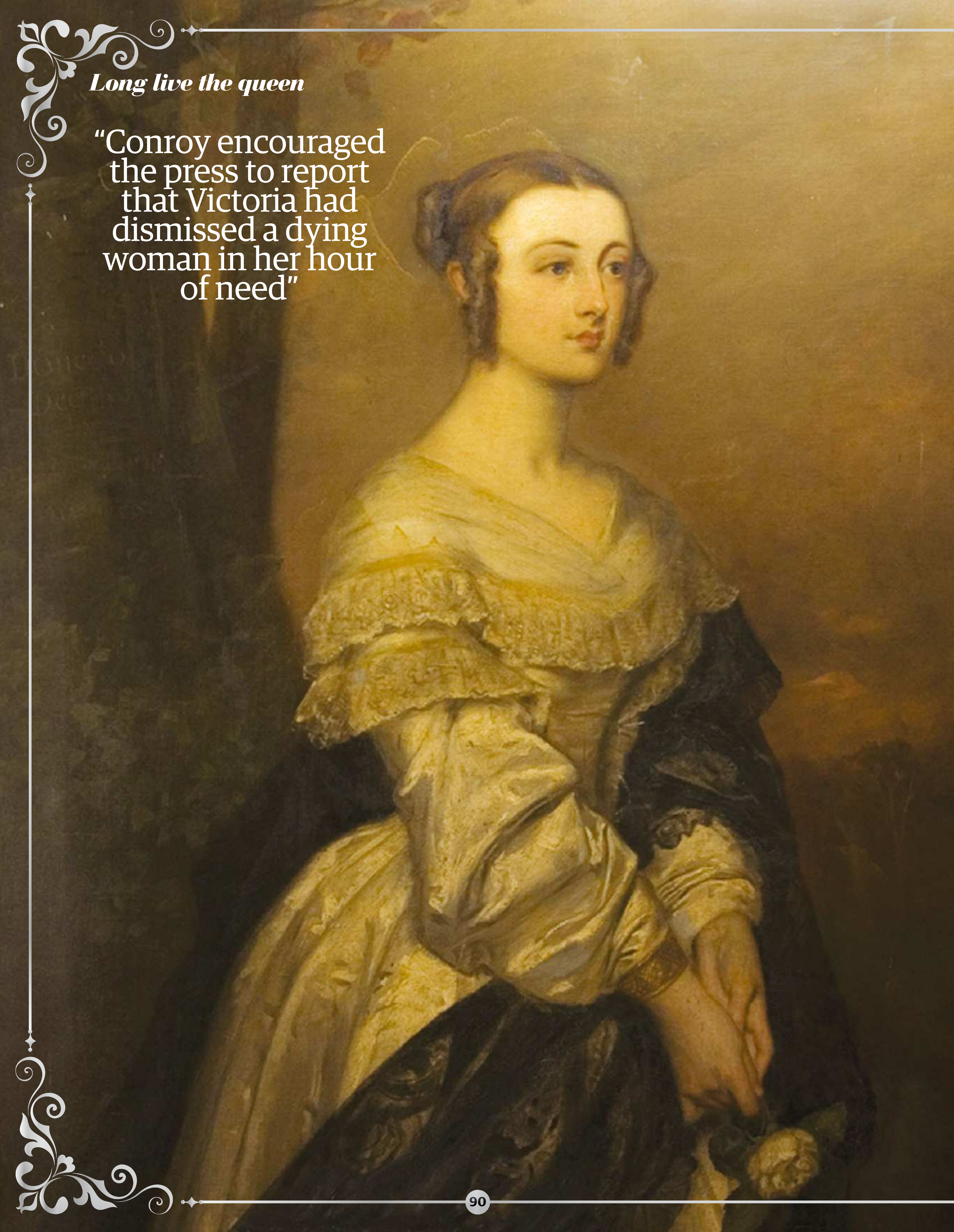


The queen's difficult relationship with her mother improved after the birth of her first child

SHE WAS ESTRANGED FROM HER MOTHER

After she was kept in lonely seclusion during childhood by the Duchess of Kent, mother and daughter did become estranged. However, after the birth of Victoria's first child the duchess was moved out of her isolated palace apartments and welcomed back into the bosom of the royal family.

“Conroy encouraged the press to report that Victoria had dismissed a dying woman in her hour of need”



Victoria's treatment of the dying Lady Flora Hastings proved to be a disastrous public relations decision

VICTORIA'S SECRETS & SCANDALS

They may have been the very model of Victorian morality, but Victoria and her family weren't immune to a few embarrassments of their own

Words **Catherine Curzon**

Though she has become synonymous with morality and ushering in the straight-laced, straight-faced Victorian era, Queen Victoria's royal household had plenty of scandals of its own. From freewheeling sons to rumours of illegitimate pregnancy and more, what went on behind closed Victorian doors was often far from respectable!

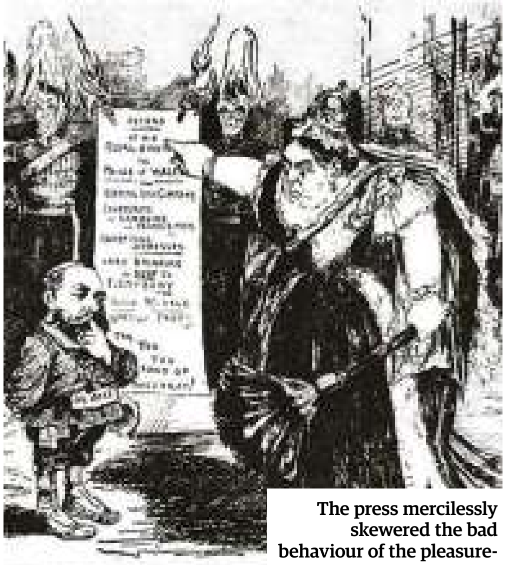
Queen Victoria had only been on the throne for a couple of years when she faced her first brush not only with scandal, but with the realities of maintaining good public relations. After a childhood spent in the oppressive household of her mother, the Duchess of Kent, Victoria's relationship with her only surviving parent had become strained to the point of virtual estrangement. Though both lived in Buckingham Palace, the Duchess' quarters were distant from the queen and her family, and Victoria was unwilling to let members of her mother's circle get too close.

One member of that circle was Lady Flora Hastings, an unmarried noblewoman who served as lady-in-waiting to the Duchess of Kent. She was also rumoured to be having an affair with the duchess' manipulative comptroller, John Conroy. Conroy was a busy man, having long been rumoured to be the duchess' lover. In fact some even believed that he was Victoria's real father.

So the young queen did all she could to keep her mother and the attendants who had once been her virtual jailers at arm's length. However, in 1839 Lady Flora began complaining of pain and a swollen abdomen. Victoria wrongly assumed that the unmarried woman was pregnant and believed that she finally had the opportunity to get rid of her once and for all. Victoria's confidante, Baroness Lehzen, along with other courtiers loyal to the queen, spread rumours of the supposed pregnancy and Lady Flora's reputation plummeted. In reply she wrote an open letter to a newspaper dismissing the rumours and blaming an unnamed foreign woman (Baroness Lehzen) for spreading gossip about her.

In order to silence the gossip frenzy, Lady Flora underwent a physical examination by court physicians and they confirmed that far from being pregnant, she was actually suffering with a fatal tumour on her liver. A repentant Victoria visited Lady Flora in the summer of 1839, just a week before she died, but the damage had been done to the young queen's public image. Conroy encouraged the press to report that Victoria had spread malicious rumours and dismissed a dying woman in her hour of need. He hoped that by doing this Victoria would appoint him her secretary and beg him to win back the support of the public. Even though her reputation with her subjects suffered, however, she did no such thing. Instead she learned the lesson the hard way and became a little more circumspect when it came to gossip in the future. For years after, though, the memory of her treatment of the unfortunate Lady Flora haunted Victoria.

As Lady Flora was growing weaker in May 1839, another potential catastrophe was about to rear its head in the shape of the Bedchamber



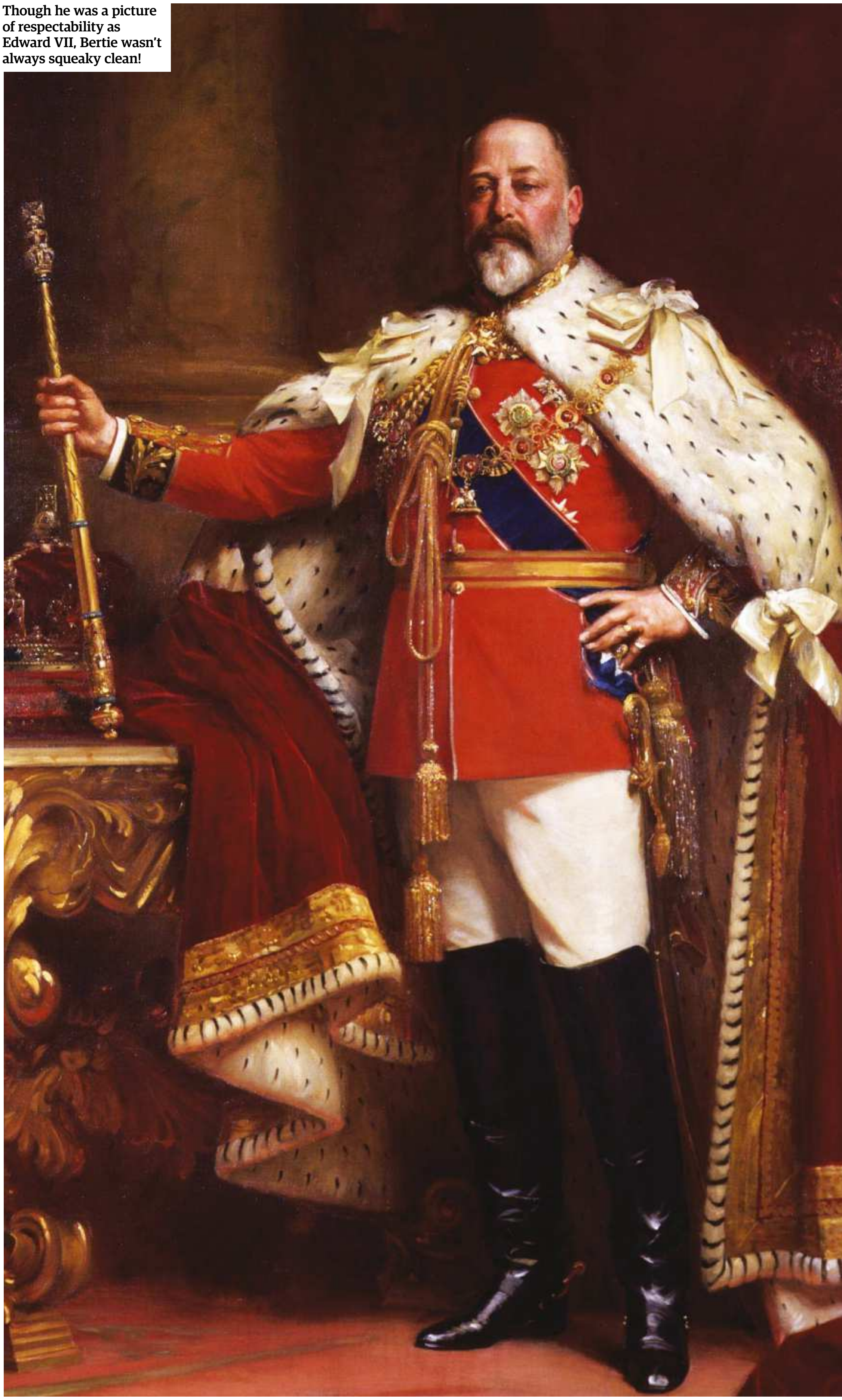
The press mercilessly skewered the bad behaviour of the pleasure-loving Prince of Wales

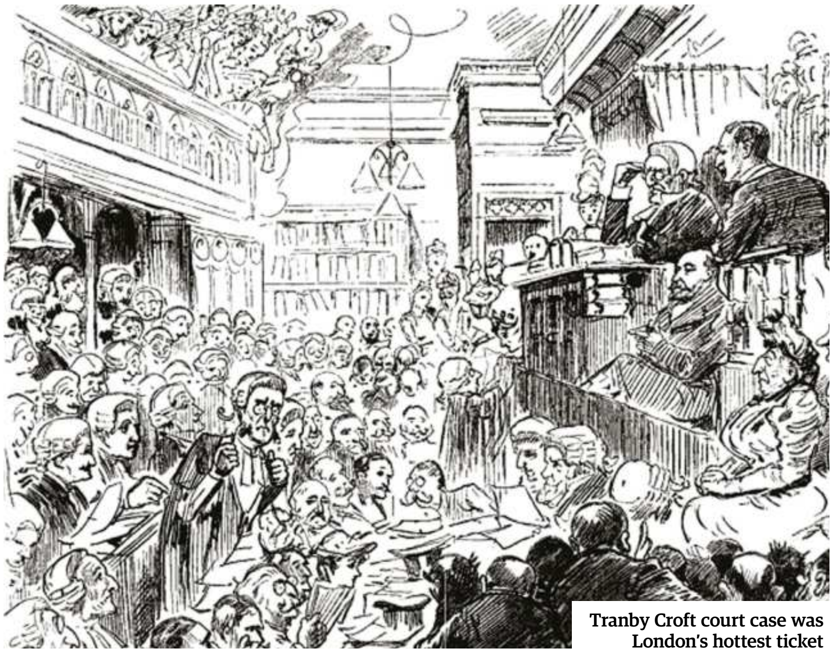
> "By far the biggest source of trouble in the lives of Victoria and Albert was their eldest son, Albert Edward"

Crisis. Lord Melbourne, the Whig prime minister and one of Queen Victoria's most trusted allies, declared that he intended to resign. As an ardent Whig herself, if Victoria must have a Tory prime minister, she wanted the Duke of Wellington. The aging duke declined the position and told her that she must invite Robert Peel, the leader of the Conservatives, to assume the role.

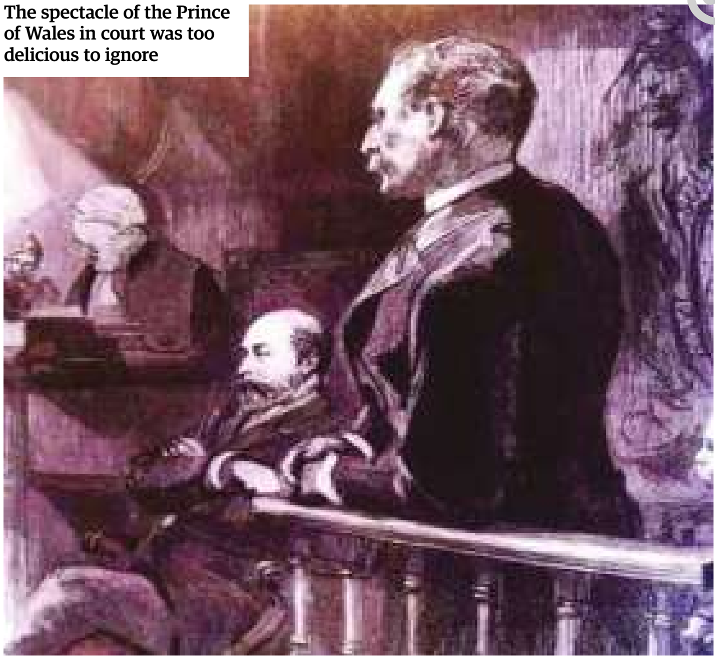
Yet Peel knew that a Tory administration would be in the minority and enjoy little power in Commons. He told the queen that he would accept the role only if she would dismiss a number of Ladies of the Bedchamber who were wives or otherwise related to senior Whigs. This wasn't a particularly shocking move, as the prime minister traditionally played a part in the staffing of the royal household. Yet these women weren't just servants to the queen, they were close friends and Victoria, who had not been allowed friends as a child, wasn't about to sacrifice them to the whims of a politician. Though Peel wanted to replace just six of the 25 women, Victoria was sure that he intended to get rid of them all and she wouldn't be moved. Melbourne supported her and as a result, Peel refused to serve as prime minister if the queen wouldn't bow to his demands.

Though he was a picture of respectability as Edward VII, Bertie wasn't always squeaky clean!





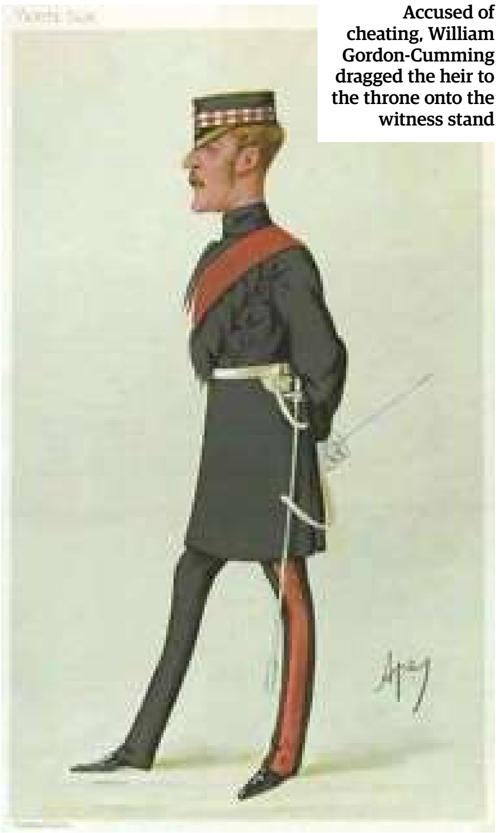
Tranby Croft court case was London's hottest ticket



The spectacle of the Prince of Wales in court was too delicious to ignore

Her friend and mentor, Lord Melbourne, was persuaded to return to office.

By the time Peel won a majority at the 1841 general election, Victoria was a wife and those confidantes who she had fought to protect had been shunted aside in favour of the company of her husband. This time she accepted Prince Albert's suggestion that she replace three of her ladies with Tory sympathisers. Later she reflected that she wished she'd listened to Peel's first offer but she had been inexperienced and far from the doughty queen she became.



Accused of cheating, William Gordon-Cumming dragged the heir to the throne onto the witness stand

By far the biggest source of trouble in the lives of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, however, didn't come from an outside source but was in fact their eldest son, Albert Edward, the Prince of Wales and later King Edward VII. Known as Bertie, he had struggled in childhood against his father's strict regime of education and discipline, and as soon as he was able to strike out alone, he was determined to make up for all the fun he hadn't had.

At 19 Bertie longed to join the army but as heir to the throne, his parents wouldn't hear of it. Instead they sent him to Ireland, where he could spend the summer undertaking military manoeuvres at Curragh with the Grenadier Guards. The soldiers were surprised to learn that the young man was still a virgin and they were determined to change that. They smuggled an actress named Nellie Clifden into the camp and in his diary entries for three dates in September 1861, Bertie recorded his sexual awakening in very short notes. He wrote, "NC 1st time, NC 2nd time, NC 3rd time". It was the start of a lifelong love of sexual decadence and the mysterious Nellie was the first of dozens of lovers who shared the bed of the Prince of Wales.

Bertie had intended to keep the tryst a secret but such hot gossip couldn't be kept under wraps. When he returned to England his parents sent him on to Germany to meet Princess Alexandra, the daughter of Prince Christian and Princess Louise of Hesse-Kassel. The couple hoped that she would be the perfect wife for the future king but while he was out of the country, somehow Victoria and Albert heard of his liaisons with Nellie. On their son's return to England, Albert travelled through a storm to confront the Prince of Wales in Cambridge, where he was studying. Just a few days later Albert's health failed and when he died two weeks after the trip of typhoid fever, Victoria was bereft. She blamed Bertie for Albert's death until the end of her days.

Nobody in Victoria's family caused her more annoyance than Bertie. Despite marrying Princess Alexandra, his love of the high life seemed to make him a magnet for scandal. Rumour had it that he was the lover of Lady Harriet Mordaunt, wife of Conservative MP Sir Charles Mordaunt, and that he had fathered a daughter with her. The little girl was born blind and Lady Harriet became convinced that this was divine punishment for her love affairs, a belief that saw her confined to an asylum. When the Mordaunts divorced, Sir Charles threatened to read out explicit letters from the prince or even force him to take the stand and though neither came to pass, society was ablaze with the gossip.

In fact it seemed as though society was often ablaze with gossip about Bertie, from the divorce of the Mordaunts to his long love affair with the famed Lillie Langtry, wrongly rumoured to be mother to another of his illegitimate children. Yet by far the most potentially damaging scandal involving Bertie was caused not by his love life, but by his passion for gambling. In September 1890 a game of baccarat erupted into what became known as the Tranby Croft affair, taking the chattering classes by storm.

The Prince of Wales was part of a group staying at Tranby Croft in Yorkshire as guests of wealthy shipping magnate, Arthur Wilson. Also among the party was Sir William Gordon-Cumming, a lieutenant-colonel in the Scots Guards. When the other attendees told Bertie that they believed Gordon-Cumming was cheating, Bertie told them that they should confront the soldier with their suspicions. This they did, promising to let Gordon-Cumming keep his reputation if he agreed to sign a binding document promising that he would never play cards again. Gordon-Cumming agreed to this but in 1891 somebody leaked the story of his cheating to the press and the outraged

Prince Eddy's name was implicated in what at the time was a shocking homosexual scandal lieutenant-colonel took the journalist to court, demanding a retraction.

Arthur Wilson was charged with defamation and among the witnesses called to testify was the Prince of Wales. No heir to the throne had been in court since 1411 and the court case became London's hottest ticket. Though Gordon-Cumming lost the case, his reputation and his commission, the damage to Bertie was considerable too. His so-called Marlborough House social set came under intense scrutiny and the public demanded to know exactly what the heir to the throne was getting up to on the public purse. It was one more nail in the coffin of the prince's relationship with Victoria and he had no choice but to rein himself in, even going so far as to all but abandon his beloved gaming tables.

Bertie's son, Albert, was to bring the aging queen some fresh headaches. Eddy, as he was known, had little interest in learning but like his father, he was keen to embrace more physical pursuits. He was caught up in the so-called Cleveland Street scandal that erupted when a brothel was found to be procuring young men for the illustrious gentlemen of London. In a time when homosexuality was illegal, the influence of some of those named as clients meant that the press was reluctant to report on the case but gossip spread that one of the supposed clients was none other than Lord Arthur Somerset, the head of Eddy's stables.

When Somerset mysteriously went abroad with the royal family, the gossips soon whispered that the royal family had arranged his safe passage out of the country in return for his silence. The whispers got louder when those who were prosecuted received extremely light sentences, suggesting that someone with serious influence had intervened to ensure that the minimum embarrassment was caused to the establishment. Had Eddy been prosecuted or outed as a homosexual, the royal family might never have recovered from the scandal. It was a far cry from the morally unblemished family Victoria and Albert had once envisioned.

Victoria commissioned a life-size statue of John Brown after his death, which was erected at Balmoral

Eddy died in 1892, but not before he had been implicated in the suicide of a heartbroken Gaiety Girl named Lydia Miller with whom he had been having an affair. However, it wasn't only the princes who seemed to attract scandal – Princess Louise, Victoria and Albert's daughter, was rumoured to have had an affair with her brother's tutor and her mother's secretary, Arthur Bigge.

Even Victoria herself wasn't immune from scandal in her later life and her famed friendship with her Scottish aide, John Brown, led some to believe that they were lovers or even secretly husband and wife. The two were inseparable and certainly devoted to one another. They slept in adjoining bedrooms and Victoria's children referred to Brown as "mama's lover", but there is no evidence of an affair between them. Of course, that doesn't mean that it didn't happen and when Victoria died she left instructions that she should be buried with a photo of Brown, as well as his mother's wedding ring, which he had given to her years before. The queen, it seemed, may well have had some scandalous secrets of her own.

There were rumours that Victoria's relationship with her Scottish aide, John Brown, was more than strictly professional

THE WIDOW OF WINDSOR

Black-clad, dour-faced and decidedly not amused, Queen Victoria's grief came to define her

Words **Catherine Curzon**

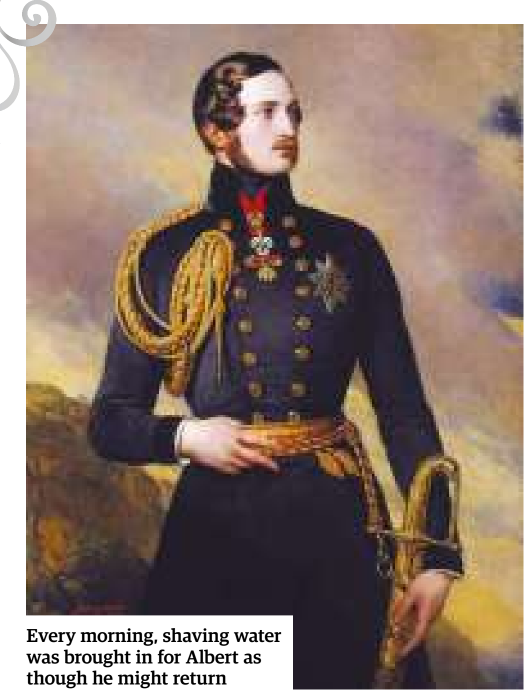
When most people think of Queen Victoria, they picture a joyless widow dressed in black, a woman who closed down her emotions on the day she lost her soulmate and devoted herself for the rest of her days to the self-indulgent business of mourning her late husband. Earlier paintings and photographs that captured a hopeful princess and composed queen who had no time for such misery have been shunted aside in the public consciousness in favour of a woman who, infamously, was supposedly "not amused".

Queen Victoria – once a lively and vivacious woman who loved her husband, Prince Albert, to the point of distraction – experienced her own annus horriblis in 1861. In March that year, her mother, Victoria, Duchess of Kent, died. The two women had enjoyed a strained relationship for much of their lives but had grown much closer once the queen had had her own children, and the brittle duchess became a loving grandmother. But if that significant loss hadn't been challenging enough, in December that same year Queen Victoria experienced the most shattering death she had ever known – that of her husband of 21 years. Albert passed away on 14 December 1861 at the age of 42. From that day forward, Victoria's life was changed forever.

The Victorian cult of mourning was one to which the queen wholeheartedly subscribed. Indeed, it might be argued that her own dedication to grief went some way to creating it. But to understand the depths of her unhappiness, we must first understand the depths of the passion she and Albert had shared. Their marriage was loving and supportive, and Victoria relied heavily on Albert to keep the home fires burning. He managed the family home and provided a rock for her to lean on, a sounding board for political decisions and a friend for a woman with the responsibility for a kingdom on her shoulders.

Victoria was just 42 when she was widowed, and that sudden severing of the most important relationship in her life hit her with the strength of a physical blow. So deeply entwined were the couple that it was almost as though she had lost a part of herself. The woman who was a queen in public

Once a vibrant and loving young woman, widowhood shattered Queen Victoria



Every morning, shaving water was brought in for Albert as though he might return

rejoiced in her private identity as a wife and lover, but with the loss of Albert she had lost a precious anchor for that identity. That other Victoria, the loving wife and passionate lover, no longer existed. With no other avenue left for her to express her passion for her husband, it instead found its outlet in extravagant mourning.

To Victoria, moving on was unthinkable; instead she focused her efforts on preserving the past. In the Windsor Castle's Blue Room, where Albert had died, the queen had clean clothes laid out for him every day as though he might return. Each morning hot water was brought into the room and his shaving kit prepared, and each day the water went cold and the kit was put away unused, ready for tomorrow's ritual. In the years following his death, the Blue Room became a shrine to Albert and a sanctuary for his wife in which she passed hours alone in silent prayer, communing with the husband she had lost.

When her marriage of 21 years ended in tragedy, Queen Victoria entered the second phase of her life and she devoted herself singularly to the business of widowhood. She famously wore black for the rest of her days and when one considers that she outlived her late husband by some 40 years, one begins to see the magnitude of her dedication. Despite multiple attempts on her life, Victoria had never feared to be seen by her subjects and regularly took carriage rides in public, but now she retreated into lonely seclusion.

Rarely seen by the public, the queen also withdrew from participating in any ceremonies or events that might require her to make an appearance. She avoided the State Opening of Parliament for five years and the hosting of important overseas visitors for even longer, experiencing severe anxiety whenever she did agree to do so. The very thought of the planned 1873 visit of the Shah of Persia left her sick with nerves, but the experience proved to be anything but unpleasant. Nonetheless, it was a rare glimmer of light in the self-imposed darkness.

Of course, Victoria's mourning didn't go unremarked and as it continued, her subjects began to feel uneasy. Once so visible and vibrant

The magnificent Albert Memorial was unveiled by Victoria in 1872 at a cost of £120,000

© Diliff

When she made her rare public appearances, Queen Victoria remained a sombre figure

© Drow69

Victoria memorialised Albert after his death, like with this sombre stone cairn at Balmoral

at the side of her husband, her isolation led to a serious case of out of sight, out of mind. With her absence growing ever more noticeable as the years went by, the cries of republicans grew. Even then Victoria wouldn't be swayed. She did precisely as much as she needed to and no more, preferring to spend her time dreaming of Albert.

Yet Victoria wasn't alone in her widowhood and she famously developed an intimate friendship with John Brown, an attendant at Balmoral. The down-to-earth Scot couldn't have been more different from the refined and disciplined Albert, and she took solace in his easy company. Though this relationship undoubtedly did much to help Victoria's spirits, it did little to improve the public perception of her and gossip swirled about the queen, who had even been nicknamed Mrs Brown by some. This was a gift to the republican movement and for the first time in many years, politicians dared to broach the subject of the queen's removal.

Victoria's daughter Alice died on the 17th anniversary of Albert's death, a coincidence she considered to be "most mysterious"

Ironically, it was a near tragedy that turned the tide. The Prince of Wales fell ill with typhoid fever, the very illness that had killed Albert, and for a time his life seemed to hang in the balance. Now the public could once again identify with the unhappy monarch, for she wasn't the woman who had self-indulgently mourned for years, but a mother worried for the life of her eldest son. Happily he recovered and in 1872, a celebration of thanksgiving was held for his restored health.

Finally, after years of hiding away, Victoria emerged once more into the public eye and her subjects, starved of contact with their sovereign, were delighted to see her again. But even though she emerged from her self-imposed seclusion to celebrate her son's recovery, Victoria would never again return to the same level of public visibility that she had once had. It was enough though, and the remaining shreds of republican feeling were further reduced when John Brown deftly tackled a would-be assassin of Victoria, adding not only to her popularity, but also his own.

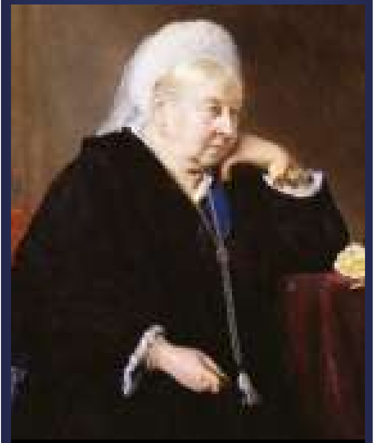
The queen took much solace from the presence of John Brown and other close members of her household, but despite her solitary demeanour she still needed companionship. She became so dependent on Princess Beatrice, her secretary and confidante, that she refused her youngest daughter permission to marry until she and her would-be husband, Prince Henry of Battenberg, agreed to live in England. Even then Victoria was bereft when the married couple departed for their honeymoon, despite the fact they were spending it just a few miles from her on the Isle of Wight.

For the remaining decades of Victoria's life, she made her mourning a public affair. Though still maintaining her unhappy demeanour and black wardrobe, she was no longer an invisible monarch. Things were never the same after Albert died but thanks to her slow, tentative emergence back into the public eye, the monarchy had been saved. Strange to think that it took typhoid fever to do it, the very illness that had stolen the Prince Consort away in the first place.

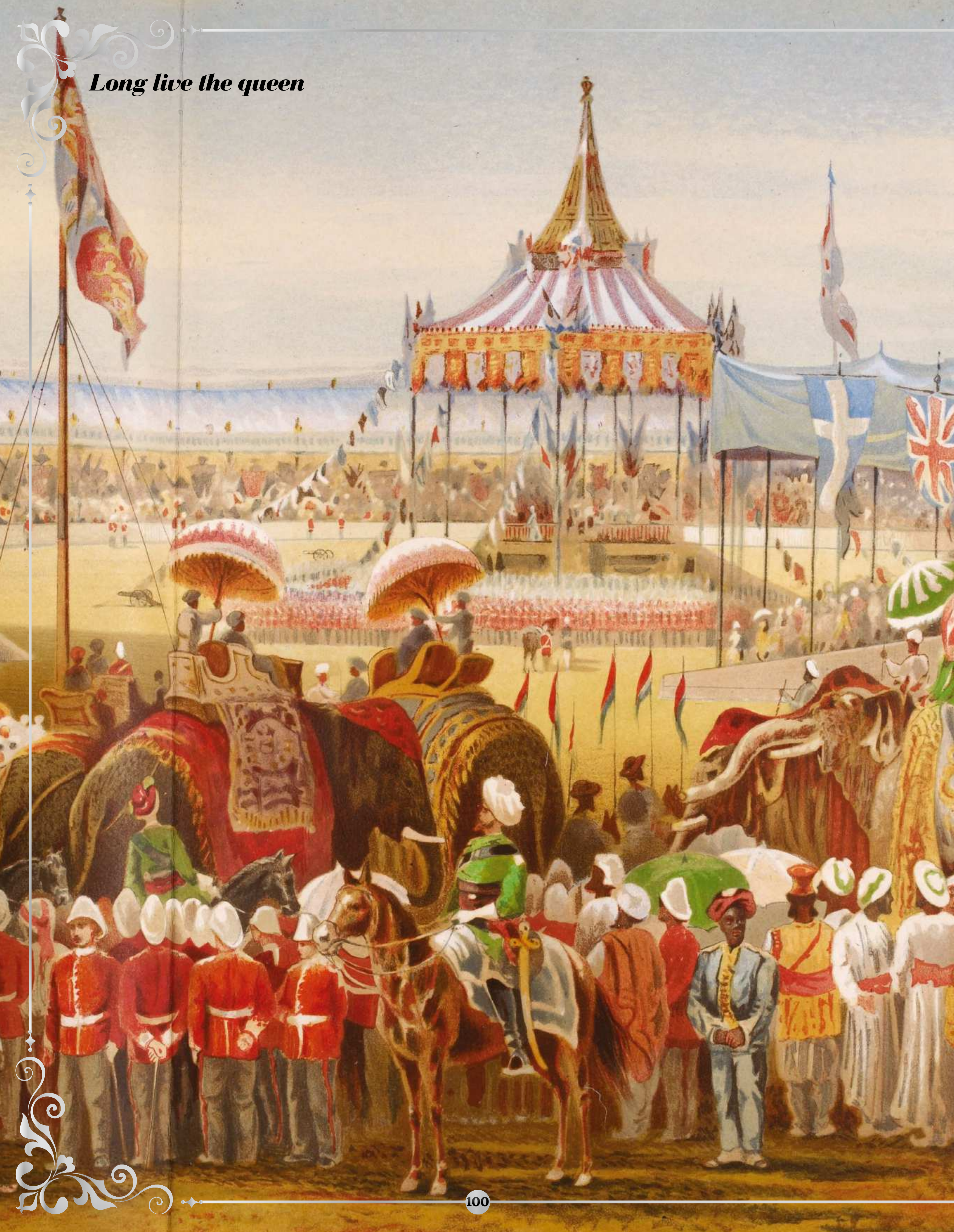
THE COURT OF PUBLIC OPINION

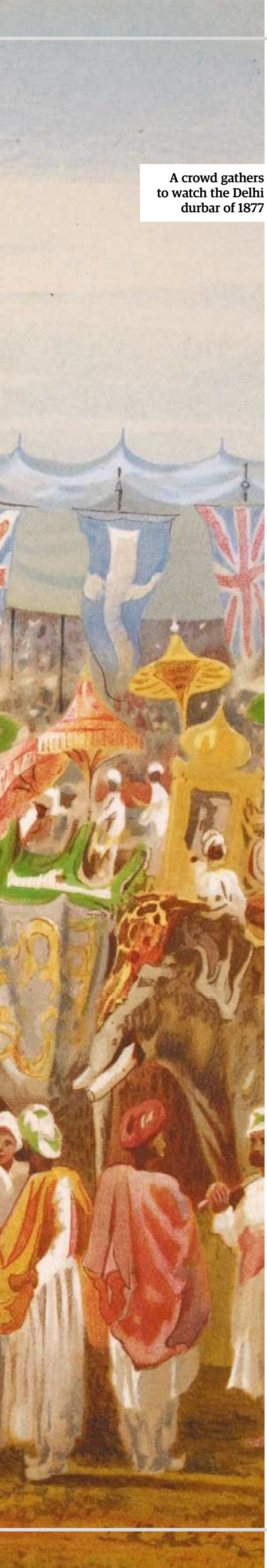
When Queen Victoria retreated into isolation and her rather self-serving period of mourning, she little suspected the damage that her decision would do to her standing, let alone the danger she was placing the monarchy in. Victoria and Albert had initially been met with coolness by the public, who regarded them as somewhat stuffy, but the country warmed to the couple over the years as their family grew.

Now the queen's decision to turn her back on public duties was all her republican enemies needed. She was no longer interested in her realms, they argued, and the time had come to end the monarchy and replace it with a republic. In the end Victoria re-entered public life, but not before her reputation had sustained a severe dent.


After Albert's death, the reclusive queen disappeared from the public eye

"After years of hiding away, Victoria emerged into the public eye and her subjects, starved of contact with their sovereign, were delighted to see her"





A crowd gathers to watch the Delhi durbar of 1877

EMPRESS OF INDIA

How a Victorian vision reinvented the Raj and transformed Britain's place in the world

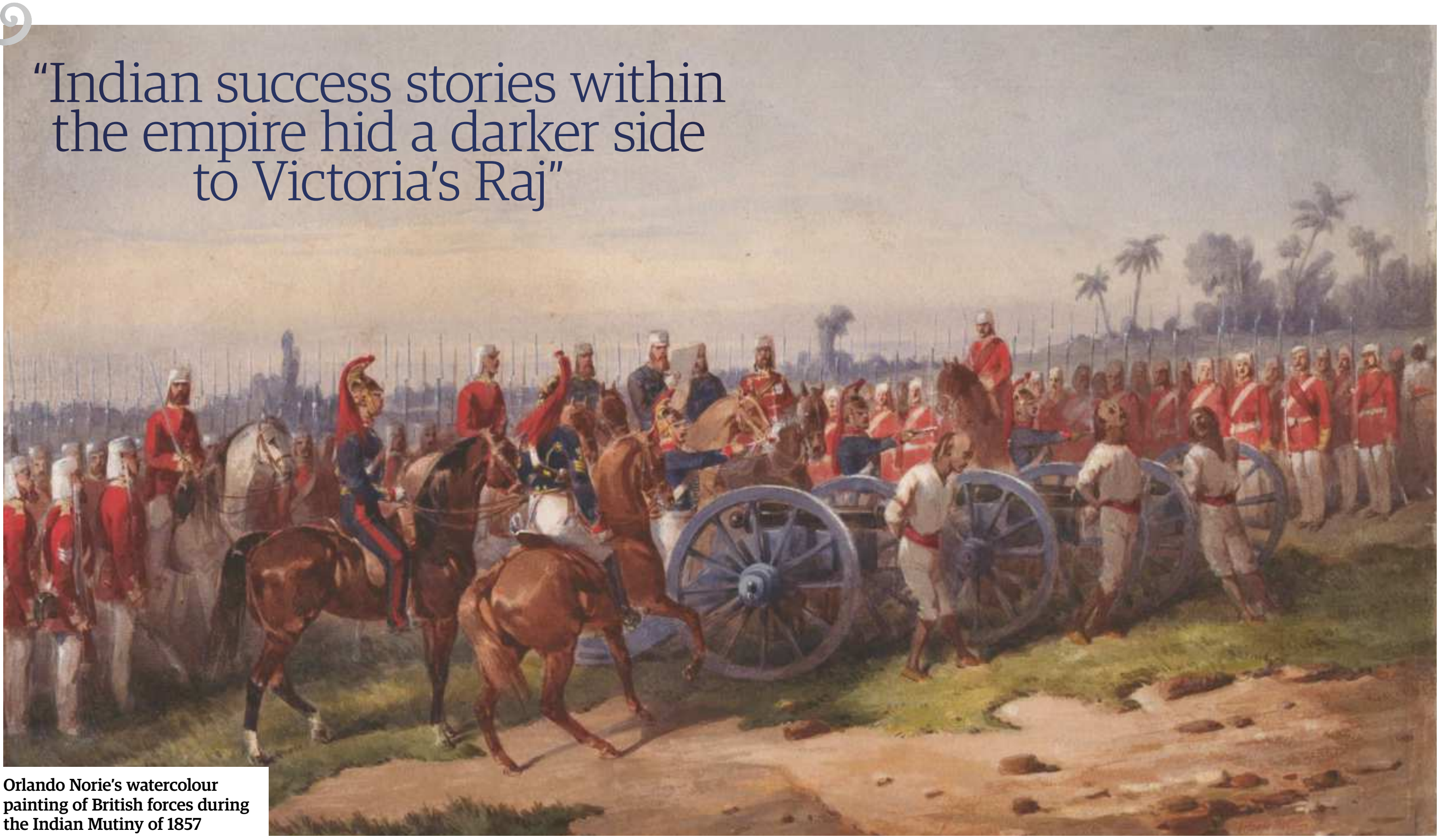
Words **Tom Garner**

On 5 May 1876, a tiny woman of German descent became empress of the mighty subcontinent of India and the greatest empire the world had ever seen. Queen Victoria's accession to the imperial throne was the most visible sign of British world domination in the 19th century and it was a remarkable feat that a small group of islands off the coast of Europe had managed to impose its will so completely on a huge country. However, Victoria's accession was a very political act that was forged out of one of the shakiest moments in the British Empire's history and designed to cement colonial rule in India, whether its people wanted it or not.

The road to Victoria's imperial destiny began in 1857 with the suppression of a huge Indian rebellion. Variously known as 'The Indian Mutiny' or 'India's First War of Independence', the rebellion began as a revolt by Indian sepoy soldiers against British rule but it soon escalated into several mutinies along with civilian rebellions. The rebellion occurred largely in central India and posed a considerable threat to British power in the region. By the time the British regained control, the bloodletting had been considerable. The rebels had committed atrocities against white civilians and the British counter-response was swift and brutal, with many thousands being killed in savage reprisals.

The rebellion had exposed a fundamental weakness of British rule in India: the East India Company. It is a strange but remarkable fact that Britain's dominance in the subcontinent in its early years was not thanks to an official government policy but the actions of a trading business that had got out of hand. The East India Company had been a presence in India since the early 17th century and had grown so large that it had its own private armies, which were officered by Europeans but largely manned by Indian 'sepoy' soldiers. Its pre-eminence was such that it ruled India with the diminished Mughal emperor as its puppet head of state. Until 1857, the British had left the status of Indian government on a curiously theoretical footing. India was not formally ruled by the British crown but the Company. Instead of being answerable to Parliament, the Company answered to its directors and shareholders. The Company did have a charter to trade from the British government but its right to govern India was derived from the Mughal emperor, whose nawab (deputy) it claimed to be. However, this was a political marriage backed up by guns, and Emperor Bahadur Shah was kept as a Company hostage in Delhi. Consequently, it was very unclear where the real authority lay in India. The rebellion changed this confusion forever. Company incompetence and insensitivity had caused the fighting and opened a Pandora's Box of revolution. During the rebellion, the sepoys had 'liberated' Bahadur Shah and persuaded him to declare Company rule illegitimate. Despite being an octogenarian drug addict, the emperor became the rebellion's leading symbol, and in its aftermath, the British government took ruthless action. Bahadur

“Indian success stories within the empire hid a darker side to Victoria’s Raj”



Orlando Norie’s watercolour painting of British forces during the Indian Mutiny of 1857

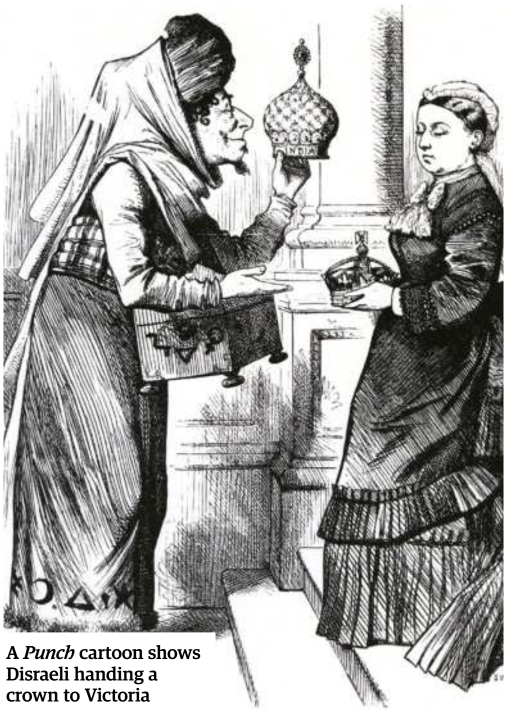
Shah was forced to abdicate and his immediate heirs were executed while the Company was dissolved. British rule in India passed directly to the UK Parliament, where a secretary of state for India was appointed to the Cabinet. Finally, to replace Bahadur Shah, Her Britannic Majesty Queen Victoria was declared Queen of India on 2 August 1858, arguably the first European monarch since Alexander the Great to rule over Indian lands.

The British now found themselves in a new position. Prior to 1857, they had been able to benefit from their colonial conquests through the East India Company without having to put in the hard graft of actual governances. With a British queen on the throne of India, the birth of the ‘Raj’ was imminent. The rebellion had exposed inherent inequalities in British rule and now the government had to address Indian ‘grievances’ while still maintaining their colonial power over them. To achieve this, British policies over the next 20 years would eventually result in Victoria being proclaimed empress.

The new government began to offer Indians glimpses of a future of unlimited progress, theirs by right as full ‘subjects’ of Victoria’s empire. This included the introduction of railways, Western industrial methods and, perhaps most importantly, a Western education system. In the same year of the rebellion, the 1857 Indian Universities Act established institutions in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, which attracted a large flow of Indian talent. A year later on 1 November 1858, the British went even further and issued a proclamation to the “Princes and Peoples of India”, that stated, “We hold ourselves bound to the natives of our Indian territories by the same obligations of duty which bind us to all our other subjects… it is our further will that… our subjects, of whatever race or creed, be freely and impartially admitted to offices in our services, the duties of which they may be qualified, by their education, ability and integrity, duly to discharge.”

While this sounds like a vision of equal rights for Indian ‘subjects’ under the crown, it was actually directed to the upper-class Western-educated elite and not Indian society as a whole. Nevertheless, thanks to this ambiguous statement, Indians began to make their presence felt. From the 1860s, Indians began to attend the universities of Oxford, Cambridge and London after competitive examinations were established for entry into the Indian Civil Service. They also became gradually politicised with the foundation of the Indian National Congress Party in 1885. Although it would later become the party that led India to independence in 1947, Congress originally had a permanent committee in London to pursue programmes of reforms and increasing Indian representative rights. Congress even opened and closed their annual sessions to God Save The Queen. By the 1890s, the political turnaround from the 1857 rebellion was so changed that an Indian businessman called Dadhabai Naoroji was elected to the Westminster Parliament as a Liberal MP. These were the fruits of the 1858 proclamation and helped foster loyalty to the British Empire and the crown. Thoughts of independence were rarely betrayed until the 20th century.

However, these Indian success stories within the empire hid a darker side to Victoria’s Raj. The rebellion had increased tensions between the British and Indians and was further hardened by the advent of social Darwinism. Many of the British felt that white supremacy was a fact of nature and that the empire should be viewed as a way of securing the wealth and prestige of Britain at the expense of its colonial subjects. This was particularly felt in the 1870s when there was a growth of international competition for global domination. The British now had to compete with


"NEW CROWNS FOR OLD ONES!"

A *Punch* cartoon shows Disraeli handing a crown to Victoria

a newly unified Germany, an expanding United States of America and an already huge Russian Empire that was alarmingly close to its Indian borders. Britain, despite its international dominance, was feeling threatened, and the incumbent Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli decided that the best way to assert Britain's imperial pre-eminence was to make it official. The British Empire would have an empress.

Queen Victoria already immodestly felt that she was an empress already. Throughout the 1860s and early 1870s, she habitually referred to herself as "empress" and her Indian territories as her "empire." This was quite presumptuous as her hold on her own British throne was rather shaky. Ever since the death of her husband Prince Albert in 1861, Victoria had become a recluse and had been rarely seen in public. This detachment had fuelled a substantial republican movement, which could not be easily dismissed in a Europe that was frequently convulsed by revolutions. Disraeli knew this and thought that the best way to get Victoria to re-engage with her subjects was to flatter her out of seclusion. It worked, and Victoria was charmed: "He is full of poetry, romance and chivalry. When he knelt down to kiss my hand, he said, 'In loving loyalty and faith'." Disraeli himself wryly remarked: "Everyone likes flattery, and when you come to royalty, you should lay it on with a trowel." That particular trowel was the ace up his sleeve: India.

Victoria was so thrilled to become Empress of India that she opened Parliament in person for the first time since Albert's death to announce

THE WITTY PRIME MINISTER

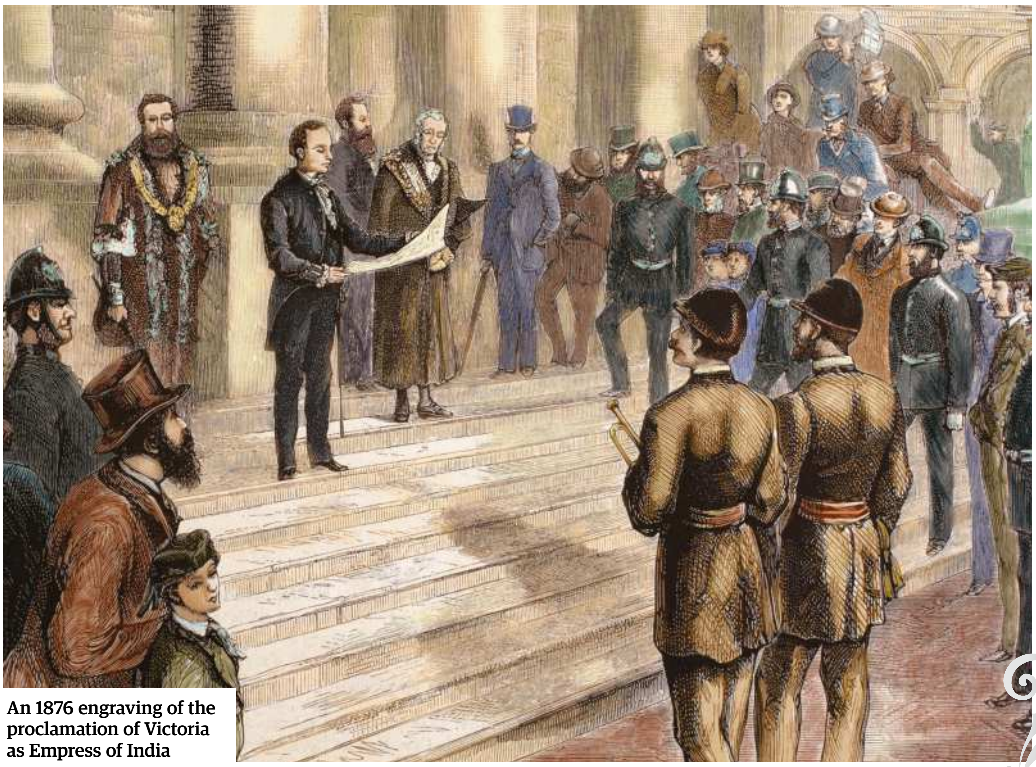
The man who made Queen Victoria the Empress of India was one of the most charismatic premiers in British political history

Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881) is one of Britain's most important prime ministers not just for his achievements but also simply for who he was. Although he was a practicing Anglican from the age of 12, he was born a Jew and therefore might be regarded as Britain's first Jewish prime minister. In an age when anti-Semitism was rife, his rise to - in his own words - "the top of the greasy pole" was remarkable and he remained proud of his Jewish heritage. On one occasion he defiantly brushed off remarks about his ancestry from a fellow MP by saying, "Yes, I am a Jew, and while the ancestors of the right honourable gentlemen were brutal savages in an unknown island, mine were priests in the Temple of Solomon."

Disraeli's articulacy was unsurprising as he was a successful novelist who produced 28 literary works and coined droll phrases like, "There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies and statistics" and, "How much easier it is to be critical than correct." When he became a Conservative politician, Disraeli served as chancellor of the Exchequer three times and prime minister twice (in 1868, and again from 1874-80) and in both offices oversaw radical legislation, thanks to his ideas of Tory democracy, which is known today as "one-nation conservatism".

This ideology proposed a paternalistic society where the establishment supported the working-class, preventing two "nations" of rich and poor and the potential for violent revolution, or as he wryly put it, "The palace is not safe when the cottage is not happy." Consequently, he oversaw bills that enfranchised working-class men, improved sanitation (including compulsory paving in towns with street lighting) and extended workers' rights.

Disraeli's achievements had a lasting impact, and one-nation conservatism is still today a key ideology of the modern Conservative Party. Echoes of it can still be seen in recent times, such as former Prime Minister David Cameron's call for "compassionate Conservatism", a "Big Society" and even the controversial slogan, "We're all in this together!"



An 1876 engraving of the proclamation of Victoria as Empress of India

KOH-I-NOOR: "MOUNTAIN OF LIGHT"

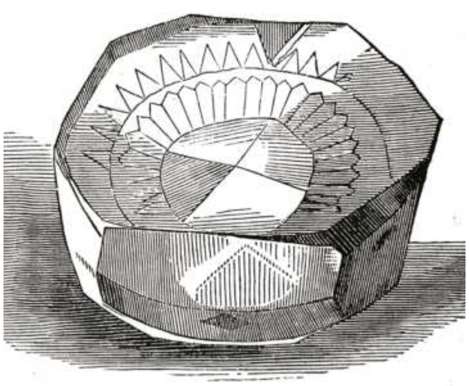
India was referred to as the jewel in Britain's empire, and this came to have a literal meaning in the 1850s when the British acquired the most sumptuous diamond that ever existed

The Koh-I-Noor was once the largest diamond in the world – a staggering 186 carats – and currently belongs to the British Royal Family. It forms part of the Queen Mother's Crown but it has an ancient history that is arguably more exotic than its present status suggests.

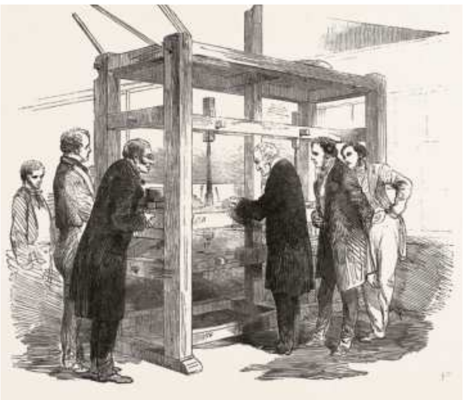
India was for centuries the richest source of precious commodities. Hindus had an elaborate mythology for gems, and diamonds were prized for their size, brilliance and supposedly fortunate attributes. It is unknown when the Koh-I-Noor was discovered (legend says it is 5,000 years old) but it was first documented in 1526 when the Mughal emperor Babur owned it. It was mounted on the Peacock Throne and came to symbolise the opulence of India's dynasty. When Emperor Shah Jahan (who built the Taj Mahal) was imprisoned by his son, it was said he could only ever see the Taj Mahal again through the reflection of the diamond. Emperor Nadar Shah gave it its Persian name of Koh-I-Noor meaning 'Mountain of Light.'

It fell into British hands in 1849, and was presented to Queen Victoria in 1851. She ordered it to be set into the Crown Jewels and Prince Albert commissioned a Dutch jeweller to carefully cut it to an oval of 105.6 carats. Since then, every queen and queen consort of the United Kingdom has worn it.

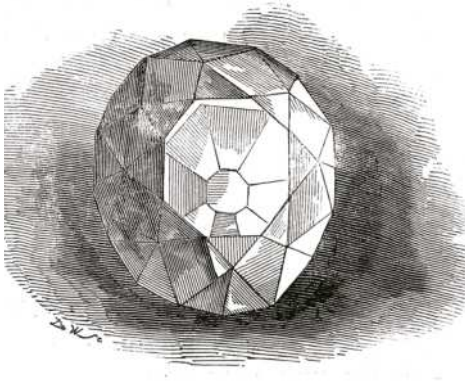
However, there is an alleged curse on the jewel, which states that any man who owns it will bring about his own destruction. Accordingly, every person who has owned it since Victoria has been a woman.



An engraving of the uncut Koh-i-Noor diamond in its original state, circa 1851

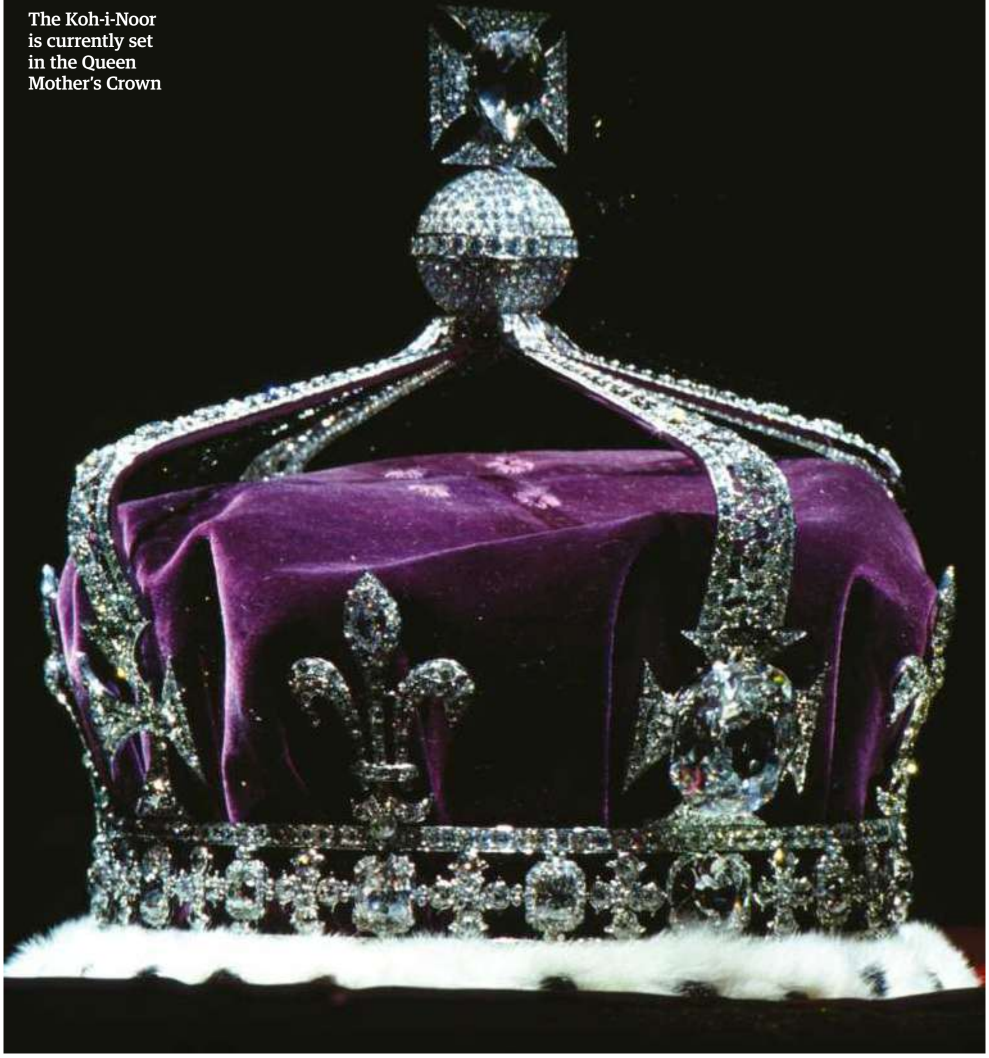


In 1852 the Koh-i-Noor was recut, as depicted in this contemporary engraving

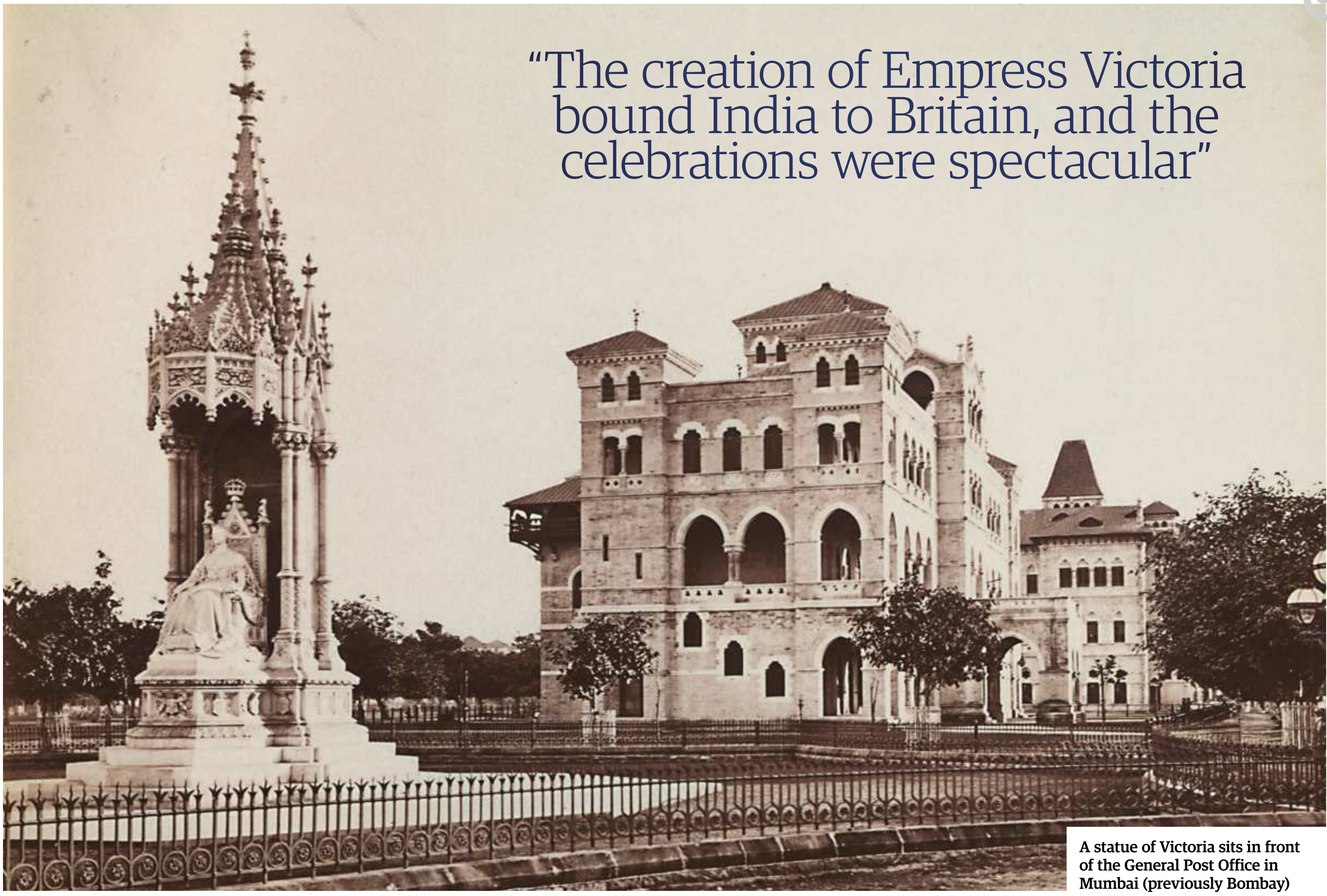


An 1852 engraving of the Koh-i-Noor after it had been cut to Prince Albert's specifications

> "There is an alleged curse on the jewel, which states that any man who owns it will bring about his own distruction"



The Koh-i-Noor is currently set in the Queen Mother's Crown



"The creation of Empress Victoria bound India to Britain, and the celebrations were spectacular"

A statue of Victoria sits in front of the General Post Office in Mumbai (previously Bombay)

the change in her royal title. This was then cemented with the passage of the Royal Titles Bill on 5 May 1876. Disraeli was so keen to make Victoria an empress that he neglected to consult the opposition. His critics felt that his imperial pretensions were despotic but many saw it as a brilliant move to confirm Britain's status as the greatest power on the planet. The creation of Empress Victoria bound India to Britain, and the celebrations were spectacular.

In January 1877, Victoria was proclaimed queen-empress at an imperial durbar (public ceremony) in the Mughal capital of Delhi. She was represented as the heir to the Mughal dynasty and her new Viceroy Lord Lytton received the fealty of India's remaining princes and maharajas. The empress did not just represent the future but also the past, and Lytton's theme for the durbar was Medieval in tone. Ancient Mughal buildings were used, pavilions were constructed with satin banners displaying the Cross of Saint George and the Union Jack and there were trumpeters dressed in medieval costumes while they played fanfares composed by Richard Wagner. The occasion was huge in scale, and the official state entry travelled through almost eight kilometres (five miles) to a sumptuous tent city for attendees in North Delhi. The durbar was designed to be awe-inspiring, and Lytton insisted that the spectacle appeal to Indians. At one point, he oddly claimed that the Indians loved "a bit of bunting." The 1877 durbar was designed to reinforce imperial authority and put closure on the tensions created by the 1857 rebellion. However, despite the pomp and ceremony there was one conspicuous absence: Queen-Empress Victoria. The living symbol of India's new union with the British Empire never once visited her Raj, and indeed it would not be until 1911 when a British monarch (her grandson George V) would attend a durbar in person.

The highly elaborate durbar was nothing short of a lavish exercise in imperial triumphalism. The British did not extend benevolent rule to its Indian subjects in its aftermath but clamped down on dissent, and racist policies prevailed. A year later, Lytton passed the Vernacular Press Act (which restricted the expression of political opinion) along with acts to open the Indian economy to unrestrained exploitation by British businesses. This was capped off by the fact that the British Raj invaded Afghanistan, entering into the Second Anglo-Afghan War which would cost the Indian taxpayers £4 million.

The increasingly hard nature of British imperialism continued its dark course in Indian society. In 1886, measures were implemented to restrict Indian entry to the Civil Service in order to retain its "British" character, and by 1913, legislation was deliberately designed to the protect the "mystique of the white race." White supremacy was at the very heart of British rule in India and it contributed to the re-emergence of Indian nationalism, which eventually found its voice in the non-violent independence campaigns of the 20th century. Indians began to take pride in their Hindu heritage, which was disconnected from Muslim Mughal rule and therefore from Christian British domination too.

The Victorian vision for a British India ruled by an imperially crowned monarch was doomed to a relatively short life. Exactly 70 years after Queen Victoria became its empress, India became an independent country free from British rule. King-Emperor George VI passed from Indian history in 1947, the last official vestige of an overbearing empire.

© Getty Images, Mary Evans, TopFoto; Alamy

VICTORIA'S EMPIRE

How a tiny island and its queen came to possess an empire so large that the sun never set on it

Words **Frances White**

The date was 22 January 1901 and the British Empire was the largest of any in human history, but the monarch who reigned over it would not live to see another day. As Queen Victoria lay dying in Osborne House on the Isle of Wight she looked back on a reign that spanned over 63 years. She had seen her empire grow from a collection of scattered isles, separated by vast plains of lands and insurmountable oceans, to the greatest the world had known. It had reached over India, plucked its riches and set the nation as the glimmering jewel in Victoria's crown. It had butchered its way mercilessly across Africa at the cost of countless natives who had tried in vain to stand in its way. It was powered forward both by Christian values and colonial greed. So, as Victoria drew her last breath, she left a world forever transformed by the empire her nation had built.

When a young Princess Victoria ascended the steps of Westminster Abbey on her coronation day, few could have foreseen the mighty empire she would eventually rule over. The British public were increasingly disenchanted with the monarchy; her grandfather, the mad king George III, had failed to protect British interests in the Americas, and her uncle George IV's terrible relations with his wife and reckless spending had tarnished the monarchy's prestige. At a mere 18 years and barely 150 centimetres (five feet) tall, Victoria hardly seemed a fitting patron for the vast ambitions of British expansion that started in the 17th century. But this blue-eyed, silvery-voiced lady possessed a stubborn will of iron and her reign would become the longest in British history. Her ascension marked not the death of the British Empire, but the new dawn of a kingdom so massive that none could ever hope to challenge it.

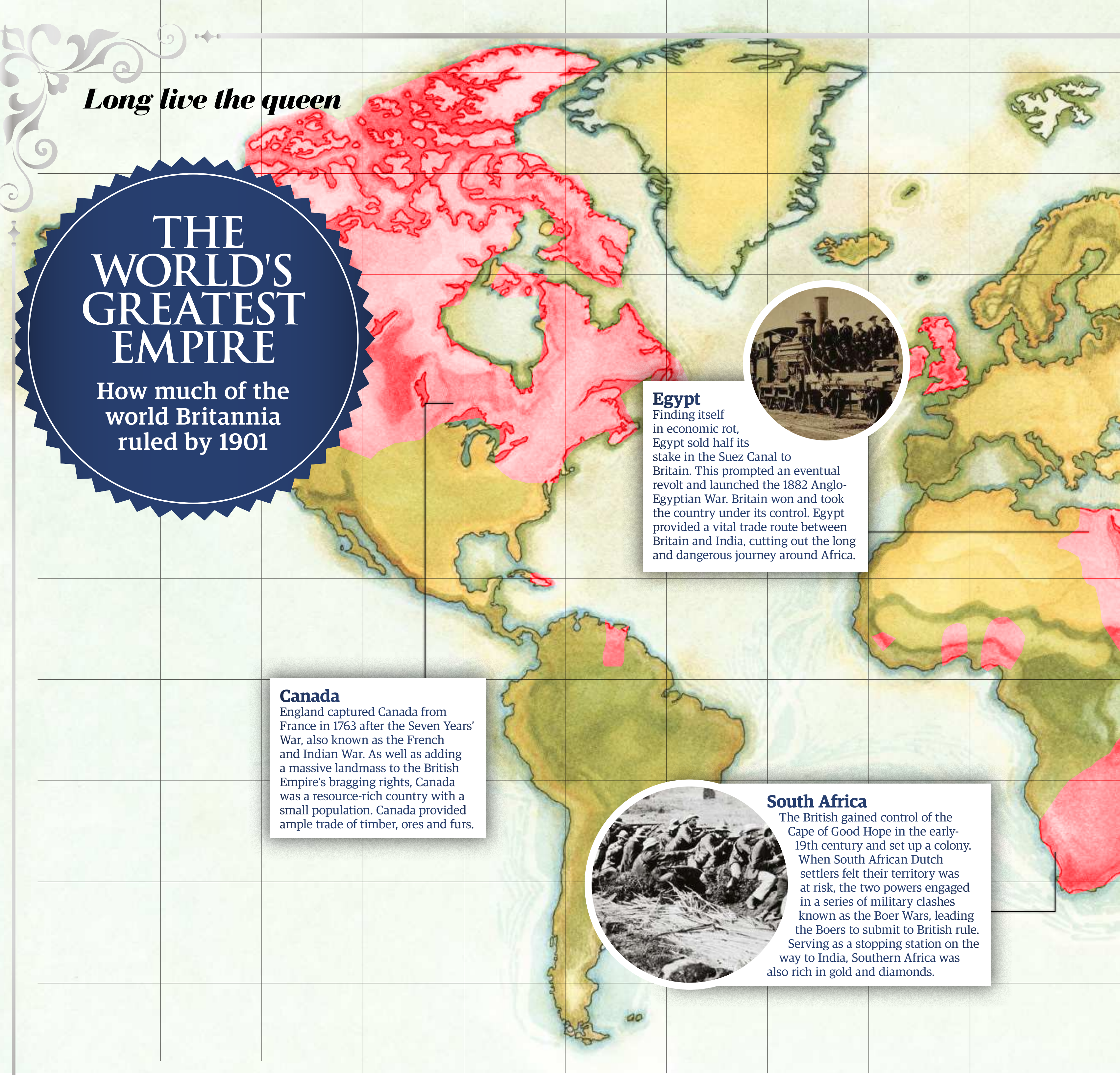
The world was changing as Victoria took her place on the throne. The tiny, scattered rural villages of England were being abandoned en masse and the cities were transforming into sprawling metropolises. Great towering concrete chimneys rose from the ground and the whir of machines sounded across the country – the age of steam had arrived. The Industrial Revolution changed Britain from a quaint maritime nation on the edge of Europe to a manufacturing colossus. Railways and steamships brought the British overseas territory closer to their mother country, opening up opportunities for trade and commerce that had previously been unfathomable.

It was Albert, Victoria's beloved husband, who opened her and Britain's eyes to the ideas that went on to shape her empire. Fascinated by mechanisms and inventions, Albert organised The Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace – a temple to the ingenuity of the rapidly developing modern world.

"Britain had the might, ingenuity and limitless ambition to conquer the world"

THE WORLD'S GREATEST EMPIRE

How much of the world Britannia ruled by 1901



Canada
England captured Canada from France in 1763 after the Seven Years' War, also known as the French and Indian War. As well as adding a massive landmass to the British Empire's bragging rights, Canada was a resource-rich country with a small population. Canada provided ample trade of timber, ores and furs.

Egypt
Finding itself in economic rot, Egypt sold half its stake in the Suez Canal to Britain. This prompted an eventual revolt and launched the 1882 Anglo-Egyptian War. Britain won and took the country under its control. Egypt provided a vital trade route between Britain and India, cutting out the long and dangerous journey around Africa.

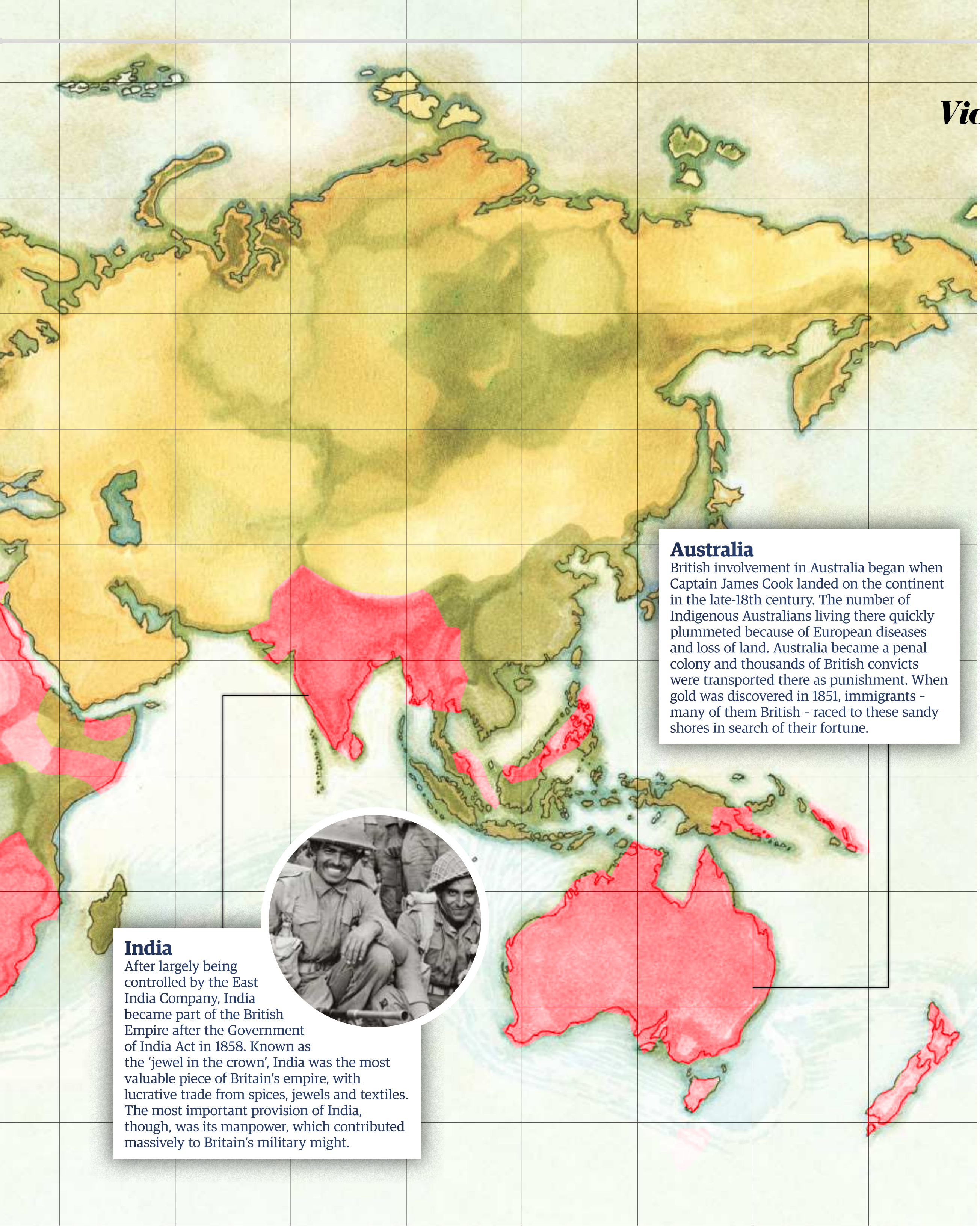
South Africa
The British gained control of the Cape of Good Hope in the early-19th century and set up a colony. When South African Dutch settlers felt their territory was at risk, the two powers engaged in a series of military clashes known as the Boer Wars, leading the Boers to submit to British rule. Serving as a stopping station on the way to India, Southern Africa was also rich in gold and diamonds.

Inventions from around the world were displayed, but this was Britain's show, first and foremost. The symbols of British might, which occupied half of the entire display space, served as clear examples of what the British Empire was capable of, and fostered ideas of national supremacy in Victoria, the government and the majority of the British population. The Great Exhibition proved that, far from the crumbling remains of a once-powerful nation, the British Empire had the might, ingenuity and limitless ambition to conquer the world.

The opportunity to pave the way for this empire arose in 1857 with the Indian Mutiny. India had been ruled by a private entity - the East India Company - since 1757. The rebellion manifested the discontent felt by the Indian people for the blatant disrespect of their beliefs and customs. The company showed disregard for the Indian caste system and issued new cartridges greased with cow and pig fat that had to be opened with the mouth, which was highly offensive to Muslim and Hindu soldiers. These actions opened the eyes of the Indian people to the daily injustice they were being subjected to, and unrest snowballed into mass riots and an uprising. Although the mutiny was eventually quelled, the rebellion led to the dissolution of the company, the passing of power to the British state and the creation of the British Indian Empire.

Queen Victoria welcomed the country to her empire in a lavish ceremony, promising that Indian native customs and religions would be respected and that she would "draw a veil over the sad and bloody past." She presented herself as a maternal figure and a crusader for peace, justice and honest government - ideals inspired by her husband.

Albert had instilled in her mind the vision of King Arthur's Camelot, an empire ruled not by tyranny but by justice, where the strong serve the weak, where good triumphs over evil, bringing not oppression and bloodshed, but trade, education and welfare. Prince Albert's influence on Victoria was immense; when he died on 14 December 1861, the empire veered into an entirely new direction.



Australia
British involvement in Australia began when Captain James Cook landed on the continent in the late-18th century. The number of Indigenous Australians living there quickly plummeted because of European diseases and loss of land. Australia became a penal colony and thousands of British convicts were transported there as punishment. When gold was discovered in 1851, immigrants - many of them British - raced to these sandy shores in search of their fortune.

India
After largely being controlled by the East India Company, India became part of the British Empire after the Government of India Act in 1858. Known as the 'jewel in the crown', India was the most valuable piece of Britain's empire, with lucrative trade from spices, jewels and textiles. The most important provision of India, though, was its manpower, which contributed massively to Britain's military might.

TIMELINE OF IMPERIAL CONQUEST

How Victoria's British Empire became the world's biggest

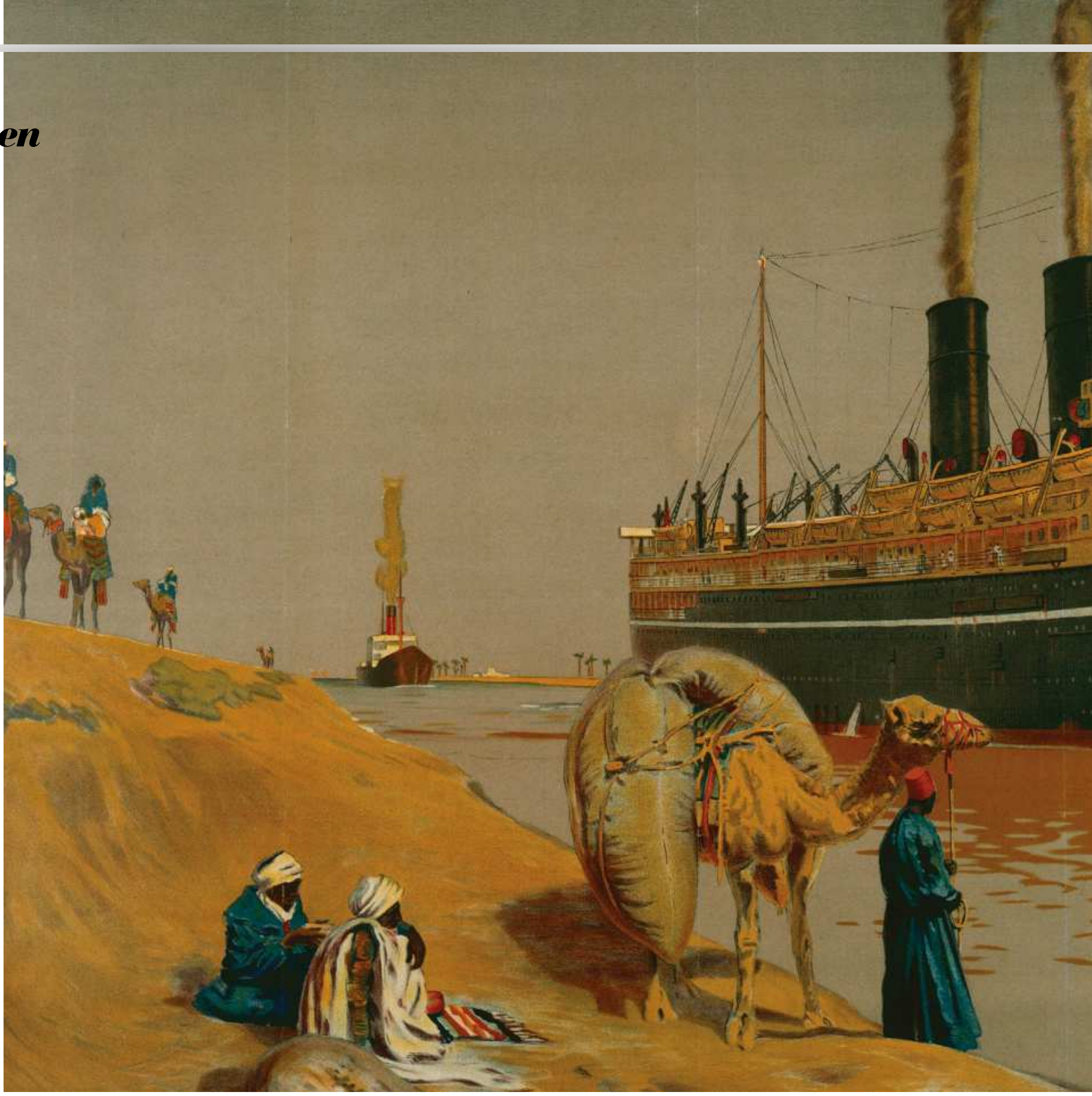
- 1838 PICAIRN ISLANDS
- 1842 HONG KONG
- 1848 INDIA
- 1853 TRUCIAL OMAN (TRINIDAD & TOBAGO)
- 1857 ADEN (YEMEN)
- 1862 BRITISH HONDURAS (BELIZE)
- 1868 BECHUANANLAND (BOTSWANA)
- 1874 FIJI
- 1878 CYPRUS
- 1878 SOUTH WEST AFRICA (NAMIBIA)
- 1881 NORTH BORNEO (SABAH)
- 1884 BASUTOLAND (LESOTHO)
- 1884 BRITISH SOMALILAND (SOMALILAND)
- 1884 PAPUA NEW GUINEA
- 1885 NIGERIA
- 1885 KENYA
- 1887 MALDIVE ISLANDS
- 1888 BRITISH EAST AFRICA (KENYA)
- 1888 BRUNEI
- 1888 COOK ISLANDS (NZ ASSOC)
- 1888 GAMBIA
- 1888 SARAWAK (MALAYSIA)
- 1889 RHODESIA (ZIMBABWE)
- 1889 TRINIDAD (TRINIDAD & TOBAGO)
- 1890 TANGANYIKA (TANZANIA)
- 1891 MALAWI
- 1894 UGANDA
- 1898 SUDAN
- 1899 KUWAIT

When Albert drew his last breath in the blue room at Windsor Castle the queen was inconsolable; the loss of the love of her life changed not only herself as a person, but the fate of her realm. As she donned the mourning clothes she would wear until her own death, she drew a veil over Albert's vision and pursued a different path for her kingdom - one of world domination.

An emerging figure in Parliament would come to foster her views: Benjamin Disraeli. The ambitious and rebellious leader of the Conservatives was led by a passion for imperial power and glory. Inspired by tales of imperial adventures, Disraeli believed Britain should pursue an empire of power and prestige. His most direct political opponent represented everything Albert dreamed the empire could be. William Gladstone, the leader of the Liberals, thought the empire should serve a high moral purpose, to follow not a path of conquest but one of commerce, sharing their moral vision with the world.

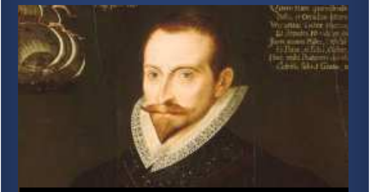
These two fiery and driven men fought over these opposing visions in Parliament while Victoria continued to mourn. Without Albert she felt incompetent and unable to face the immense duty that her role dictated. With her strong conservative views she found Gladstone and his liberal reforms dangerous and unpredictable. Disraeli, suave, coy and dripping with forthright confidence, enchanted the lonely queen. With his constant flattery and sharp wit, Disraeli reignited her interest in politics and captivated her, as Albert had done so previously, with his vision of just how mighty the empire could be. However, Gladstone's liberal vision and Albert's quest for Camelot had not completely faded. The British people, led by strong Protestant beliefs Victoria herself had instilled in them, felt it was Britain's role - their duty even - to civilise people around the world. They believed the British cause was to export not only trade, but also gospel values of morality and justice.

It was in pursuit of this lofty goal that many missionaries turned their attention to Africa. Little was known of the 'Dark Continent', but the common perception was that it was

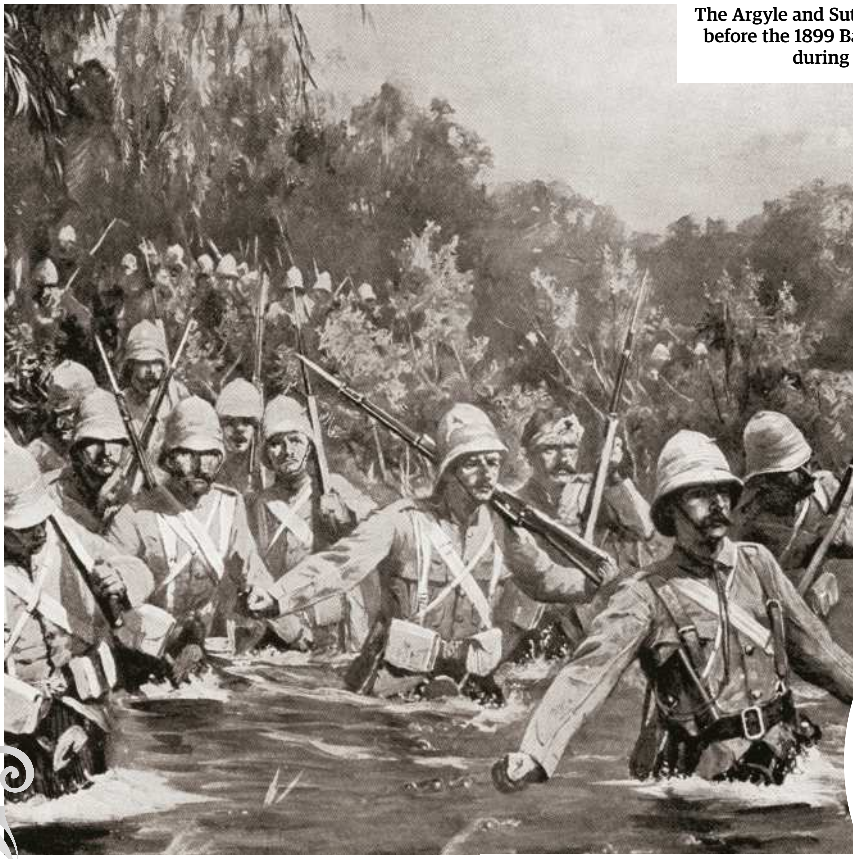


WHAT WAS THE EAST INDIA COMPANY?

Emerging from humble beginnings, the East India Company began as a simple enterprise of London businessmen who wanted to make money from importing spices. The company was granted a royal charter by Queen Elizabeth I in 1600, and in 1601 James Lancaster led its first voyage. The company set up trade outposts in Indian settlements that slowly developed into commercial towns. Steadily increasing its territory, the company claimed vital trading ports from Aden to Penang. As its control extended, the company became the most powerful private company in history, with its own army established by Robert Clive, the first British governor of Bengal. With its great military power behind it, the company controlled India with a combination of direct rule and alliances with Indian princes. The East India Company eventually accounted for half of the world's trade, specialising in cotton, silk, tea and opium.



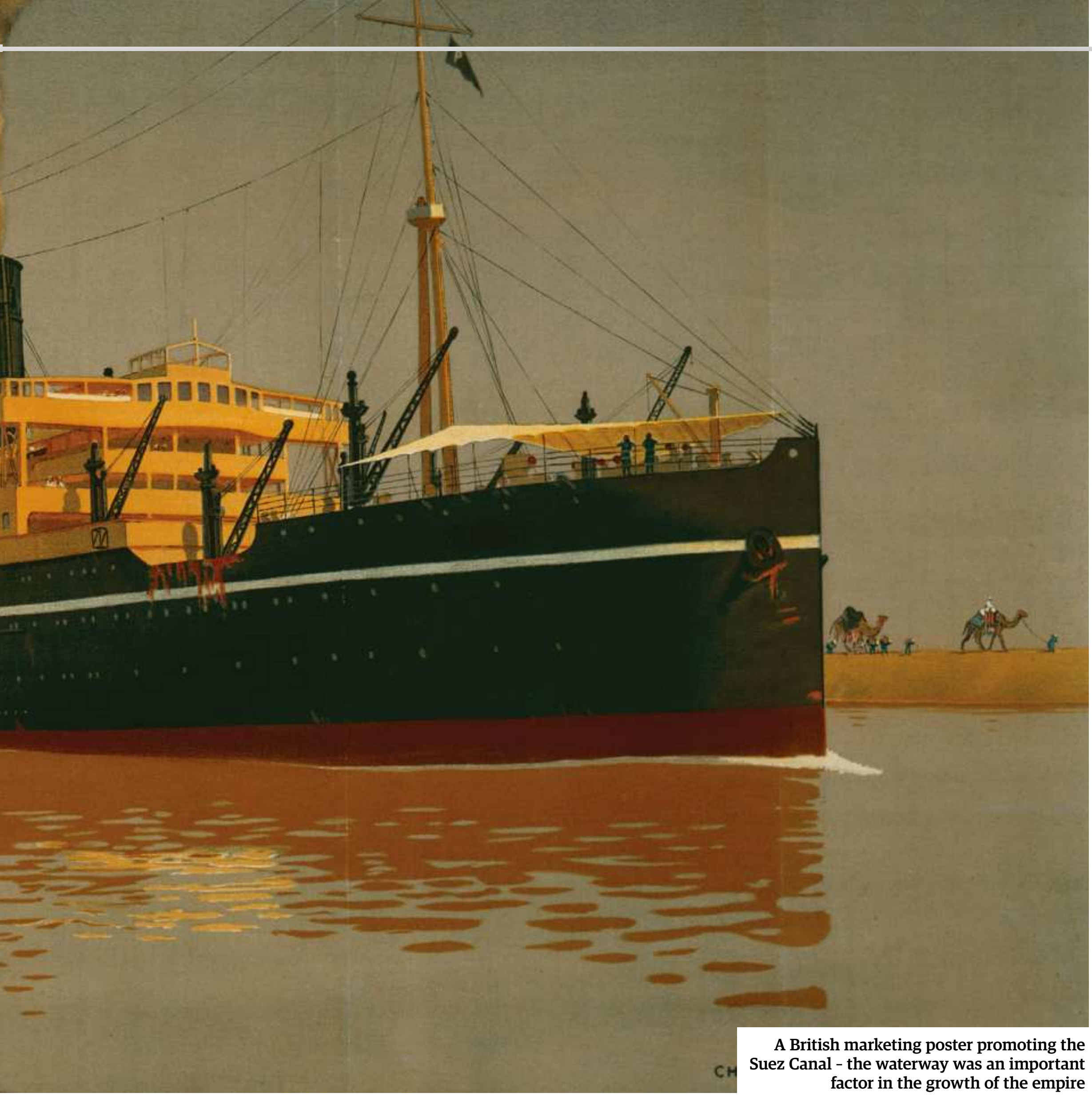
Lancaster was an Elizabethan trader and privateer



The Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders before the 1899 Battle of Modder River during the Second Boer War

a place of pagan worship ravaged by tribal wars. One missionary in particular would capture the attention of the British nation. Tall, handsome and heroic, David Livingstone embodied everything the British believed their nation represented. A medical missionary, Livingstone's daring adventures around the continent were followed by a captivated British public. Fighting vicious beasts, battling through dense jungles and suffering a multitude of illnesses, Livingstone was the heroic face of the empire's Christian ideals.

Livingstone's horrific confrontation with African chain gangs was to drive the British cause of expansion. The slavery rife in Africa was abhorrent to Livingstone and the British public, as the practice had been abolished across the empire in 1833. The queen and government united behind Livingstone's quest to find a suitable trade route, hoping that by doing so, the African people would find ways of making a living that wasn't built on the backs of slaves. Livingstone's journey was a failure and he returned to scathing criticism – something the imperialist Disraeli leapt on with glee. His flattery of Victoria had



A British marketing poster promoting the Suez Canal - the waterway was an important factor in the growth of the empire

> "The Industrial Revolution changed Britain from a quaint maritime nation into a manufacturing giant"

completely won her over, and the monarchy and government became united in the pursuit of one goal - the expansion of the empire.

The perfect opportunity to begin this new project emerged as another nation struggled to survive. The Egyptian ruler, Isma'il Pasha, was confronted by crippling debts after reckless spending on lavish ceremonies and a costly war with Ethiopia. In an act of desperation he made an offer to sell Egypt's shares in the Suez Canal to the British. The canal was more than a mere trading port; it opened up a short route to India across Egypt and down the Red Sea, cutting out the lengthy journey around Africa. The Egyptian ruler's offer would give the British a controlling influence over the jugular of the empire. Disraeli urged Victoria to accept, she immediately grabbed the opportunity and the Suez Canal fell into British hands.

With control of India, Britain was already the most powerful nation on Earth and three-quarters of the world's trade was transported in British ships, but this control was being threatened. The Russian Empire had been steadily expanding east and south and was getting uncomfortably close to Victoria's prized jewel - India. The Middle East was largely controlled by the Turks, but they were busy dealing with violent rebellions. The Turkish treatment of their Christian subjects was shocking and atrocious, but as Russia backed the rebels the British had no option but to support the Turks. The British public, to whom Russia stood for everything Britain opposed - ignorance, slavery and subjugation - largely supported this choice. Facing the prospect of imminent war with the strongest nation on the planet, Russia agreed to peace talks and thanks, in part, to the charisma and negotiation skills of Disraeli, the country agreed to stop their advance on the Middle East.

Imperial spirit rushed through the public as the British muscle flexed and proved its might again. As the empire continued its steady expansion across the continent, it came face-to-face with the most powerful African nation - the Zulus. The British, with a bloated ego, underestimated the strength of their spear-wielding enemies and suffered a crushing initial defeat. In the end it took

HOW QUEEN VICTORIA CAME TO RULE THE WORLD

Dominance of the seas

Britain employed a 'two-power standard' in 1889, which called for the Royal Navy to maintain a force at least equal to the combined strength of the next two largest navies in the world. This policy ensured British dominance of the seas with a string of naval bases encompassing the whole world. The sheer size and strength of the navy served its purpose, deterring any would-be competitors and confirming its position as ruler of the waves.

The Industrial Revolution

Britain was the first nation to harness the power of steam and the first to undergo an industrial revolution. This resulted in the mass production of low-cost goods to trade around the world. It also gave Britain's military an array of resources like rifles, steamships and trains, equipping it to defeat any possible enemies. Medical advances also allowed British explorers to penetrate remote areas without fear of tropical diseases.

The quest to spread democracy

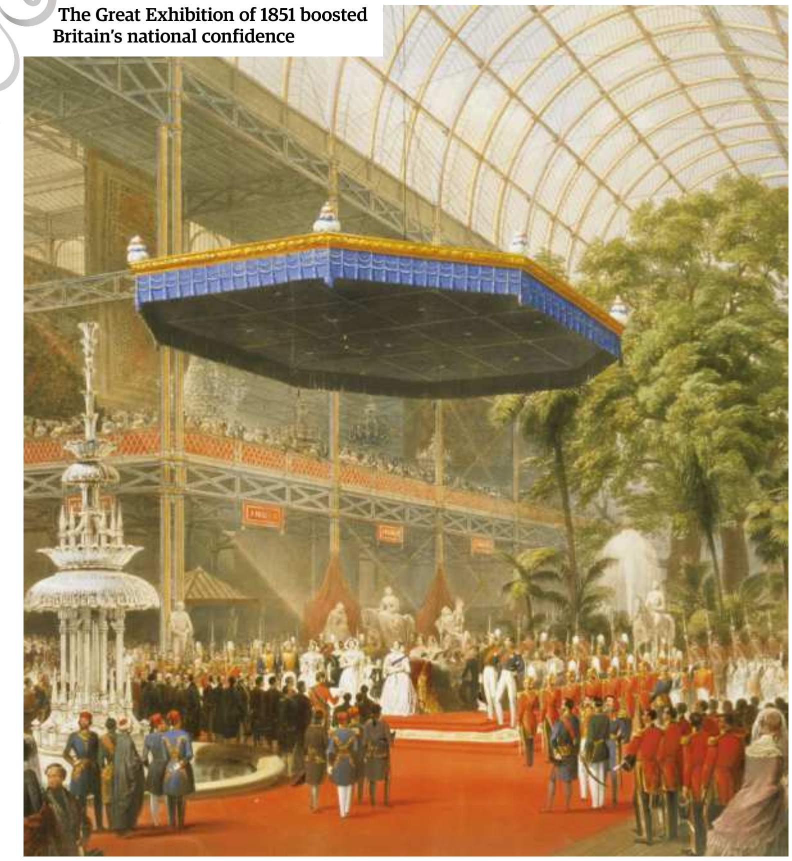
Land grabbing aside, the British Empire was led by a strong Protestant desire to improve the world. Britain saw itself as an agent of civilisation - one they wanted to spread worldwide, bringing peace, order and stability. This belief that they were doing genuine good led men like David Livingstone to travel to Africa to spread the word of God, and with it, the British Empire.

Taking advantage of the competition

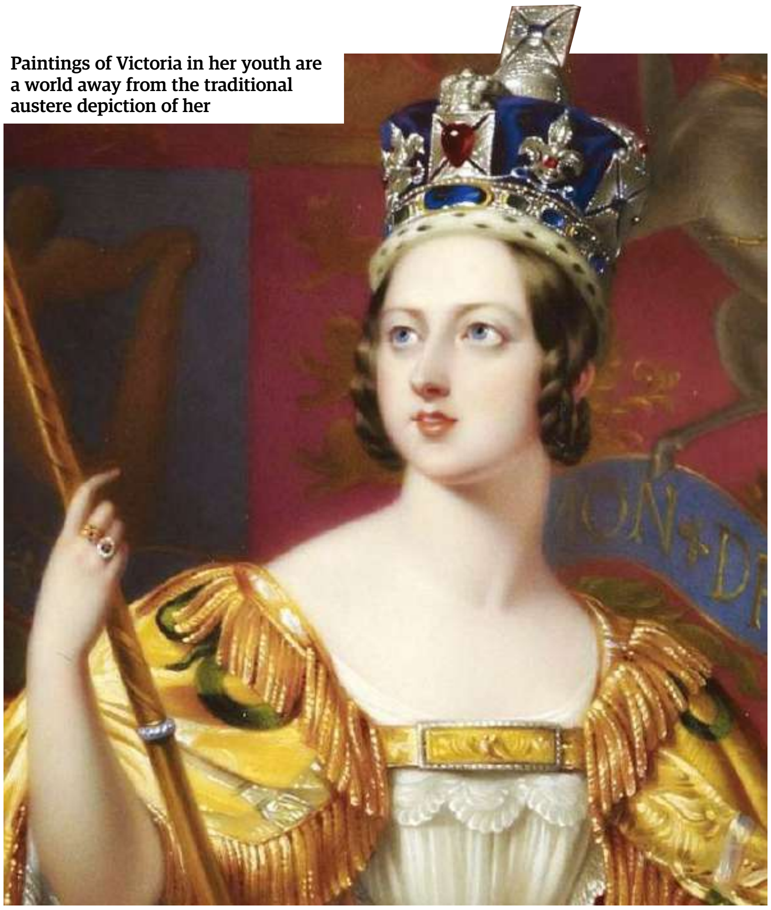
As major powers of the world such as Spain, France, the Netherlands and the Ottomans were losing power, the British began to peak in strength. Britain was able to take advantage of the European wars that had weakened other nations as it enjoyed a period of relative peace, allowing uninterrupted expansion of its empire. Any threats that did emerge, such as Russia, just gave Britain new zeal to cement its powerful hold on the world.

Strong leadership

Britain was ruled by a single monarch throughout most of the 19th century - Queen Victoria. The record-breaking length of her reign brought a sense of stability and contributed to the unconquerable notion of the British Empire. Although Victoria did involve herself in government, her role was symbolic rather than one of direct power, which ensured stability of British politics. While other nations were dealing with socialist movements, Britain enjoyed a long period of relative domestic peace.



The Great Exhibition of 1851 boosted Britain's national confidence



Paintings of Victoria in her youth are a world away from the traditional austere depiction of her

> "As more British bodies piled up, British confidence in their own unconquerable might began to wane in Africa"

16,000 British reinforcements to prise the Zulus' independence from their grip. Expecting to return to a wave of praise for their daring exploits, the victorious army was surprised to discover that British opinions were changing once again.

Gladstone, the "half-mad firebrand", as Victoria dubbed him, preached his opinions about the mass slaughter of Zulus and rampant destruction of their homes. Victoria was outraged but the public sided with Gladstone and, much to the queen's dismay, the power of the government switched hands once more. Liberal leader or not, all of Europe's attention was firmly fixed on Africa as nations began a scramble to establish colonies there. In amongst this mad rush to establish new territory by European powers, it was arguably one man's actions that would determine the ultimate fate of Victoria's empire.

Led by Muhammad Ahmed, revolution was tearing through the Sudan as tribes rose against their corrupt rulers. As this holy war drew uncomfortably close to the Suez Canal, Victoria urged Gladstone to utilise the British troops stationed there to defend it. The liberal leader refused. In order to buy time he sent one man, General Charles Gordon, to secure the evacuation of loyal civilians and soldiers.

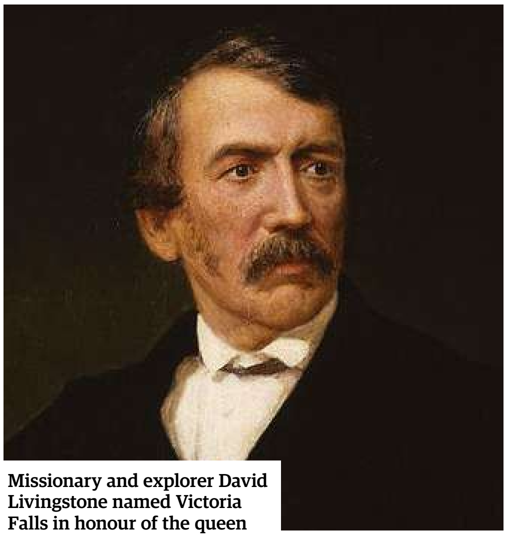
Like Livingstone, Gordon was a national hero. He was brave, dashing, popular and his decorated military career had painted him in the British public's eyes as a gleaming knight of old. Despite these qualities, Gordon was also wild and unpredictable. When he reached the Sudan he was horrified by the slavery rife in the region and decided to face the Mahdi in battle. With limited forces, Gordon soon found himself besieged in the city of Khartoum. His appeals for aid, to the adoring public's outrage, fell on deaf ears in the government. It took more than eight months of public fury to finally force Gladstone's hand, but it was too late - Gordon, the nation's hero of Christianity, was dead.

In an instant the liberal vision was shattered. Gladstone was voted out and his moral influence departed with him. The renewed crusading spirit of British imperialism found its poster boy in a man who would lead the empire down a very dark and dangerous path.

Moving from England to Africa to work on a cotton farm, Cecil John Rhodes had become outrageously wealthy from the diamond rush, but he wanted more - the whole of Africa. Driven by greed and lust for power, Rhodes wished to create a British colony across Africa, not for the betterment of its people or to spread Christian values, but for profit and business.

Using the tenacity and cunning that had elevated him to success, Rhodes tricked and butchered his way across the continent with the British government backing him every bloody step of the way. Rhodes made it his purpose to make the world English and famously said, "If there be a God, I think that what he would like me to do is paint as much of the map of Africa British Red as possible." His path of colonial greed led Britain head-first into a conflict now known as the Boer Wars.

Gold had been found in Transvaal in northern South Africa, and Rhodes worried that this would prompt an alliance with the Germans, thus cutting



Missionary and explorer David Livingstone named Victoria Falls in honour of the queen

MAIN COMPETITORS

Three countries that were battling with Britain for territory

Russia

As England expanded its territory, so did Russia. For a hundred years Russia expanded east and south, narrowing the gap between the British and Russian empires in Central Asia. Britain soon became obsessed with protecting India, which was a rich source of goods and manpower. The competition for dominance of the states that separated them - Iran, Afghanistan and Tibet - became commonly known as The Great Game. The looming, but unlikely, threat of Russia's attack led Britain into largely unnecessary military involvement in Afghanistan and Tibet.

Germany

From 1850 onward, Germany began to industrialise at an astonishing rate, transforming from a rural nation to a heavily urban one. In the space of a decade Germany's navy grew massively and became the only one able to challenge Britain's. Although the German Empire of the late-19th century consisted of only a few small colonies, the newly unified state slowly moved toward colonial expansion in Asia and the Pacific. As Wilhelm II rose to power, his aggressive policies in achieving a 'place in the sun' similar to Britain was one of the factors that would lead to the First World War.

France

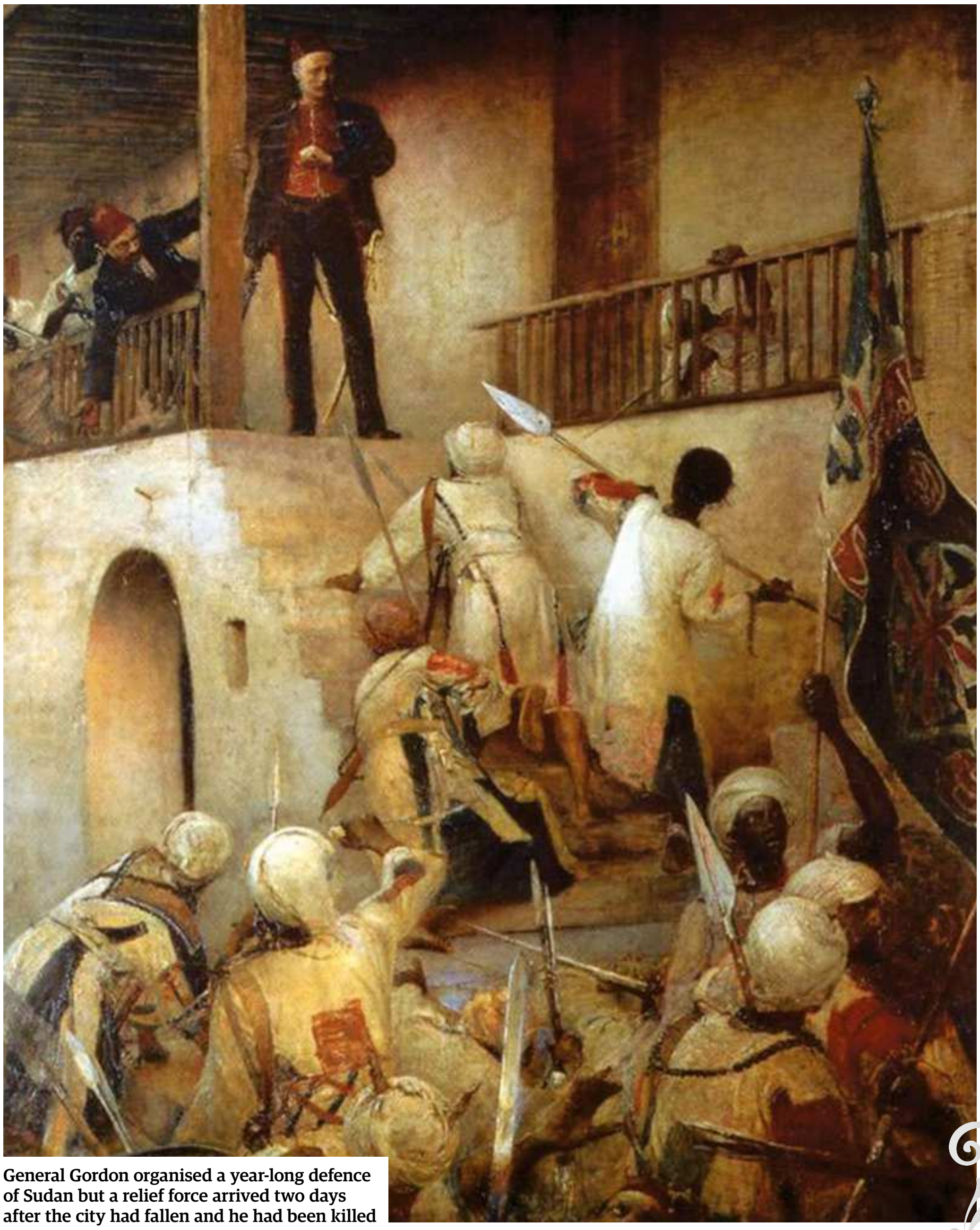
Britain's age-old rival, France was still licking its wounds after the loss of most of its imperial colonies in the early part of the 19th century. However, French leaders began a mission to restore its prestige in 1850, seeking to claim land in North and West Africa as well as in Southeast Asia. After the defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian War, it continued with zeal to expand its empire, acquiring land in China and all over Africa. Unlike most of its rivals, France would continue expanding after WWI and well into the 1930s.

off his route to the north of the continent. Rhodes planned an uprising to overthrow the Boer leaders, but it did not go as planned - far from the naked, spear-wielding foes he had previously conquered, the Boers had guns, and they fought back hard with skill and courage.

Outrage tore across Europe against what was seen as an unprovoked attack on an independent state, but not in Britain. Fully convinced of their noble mission, the British people believed the Boers to be vicious and uncompromising. More soldiers poured into the region, into a war they believed would be short and glorious, but as more British bodies piled up - Victoria's own grandson among them - British confidence began to wane.

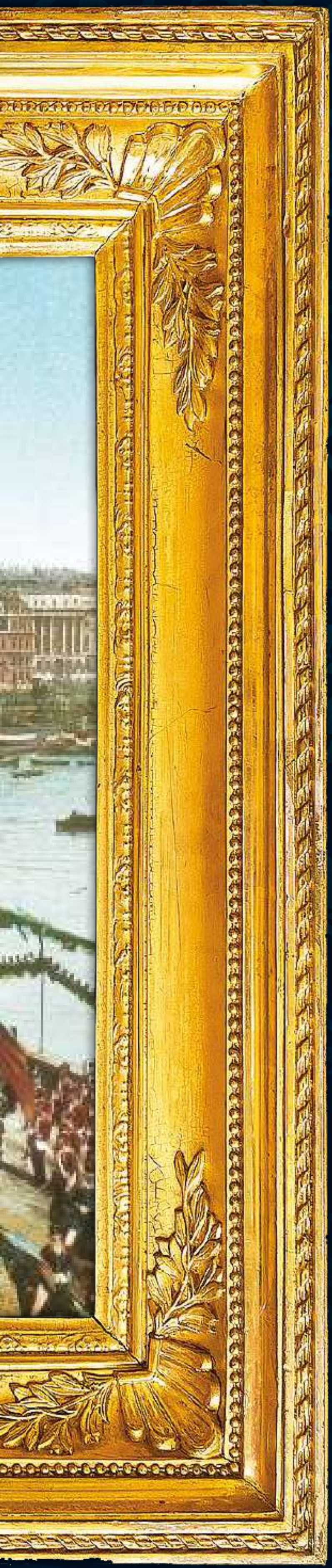
As British reinforcements continued to flood into the territory, the tide slowly began to turn. Rhodes had managed to squeeze a win from the jaws of defeat and the Boer territories became British colonies. The empire had grown, but at a cost. Rhodes's controversial actions during the war - including forming what would come to be known as the first concentration camps - had been a step too far for the British public. What had begun as a noble quest of Christianity had transformed into a greedy and brutal scramble for power. When Rhodes died his merciless version of imperialism was buried with him in the dry African dirt.

When Victoria passed away she was finally rid of the black mourning clothes she had worn for 40 years and was dressed entirely in white as she prepared to reunite with the dearest love of her life. She was, however, leaving another behind; the empire she had mothered now stretched across the globe with large swathes still coloured in the pink of British rule. As the sun set on the quiet room in which she lay in Osborne House, it was rising on the bustling spice markets of India, and soon the vast plains of British land in Africa would be bathed in warm golden light. Victoria had died, but the legacy she left behind continued to expand over the face of the planet. Even without their driver, the cogs of the British Empire whirred steadily on for another half century at least.



General Gordon organised a year-long defence of Sudan but a relief force arrived two days after the city had fallen and he had been killed

Victoria was queen for more than 63 years – the second longest reign in British history after Queen Elizabeth II, who broke Victoria's record in 2015



Left: A hand-coloured image of the Diamond Jubilee on 22 June 1897

VICTORIA'S JUBILEES

How the British Empire celebrated the milestones in their beloved monarch's reign

Words **Jodie Tyley**

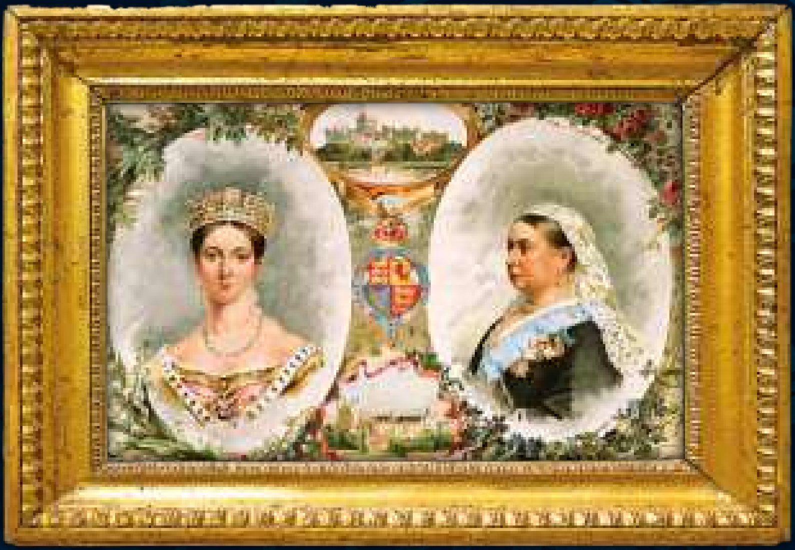
Britain had never witnessed a Diamond Jubilee before, but when Queen Victoria reached the 60th anniversary of her reign on 22 June 1897, the occasion was celebrated across the globe. Victoria was the head of a dominion that ruled over 450 million people and the Jubilee was to be a 'festival of the British Empire.' Eleven colonial prime ministers journeyed to London, along with forces from Canada, India, Africa and the Antipodes, who joined the British Army and Royal Navy on parade in all their regalia.

Crowds lined the streets of London, in awe of the 17-carriage procession carrying the queen and members of the Royal Family from Buckingham Palace to St Paul's Cathedral. There, a thanksgiving service was held in the open air to accommodate the ageing monarch. At 78 years old and frail with arthritis, Victoria could not climb the stairs to the Cathedral. Touchingly, the ceremony included a hymn that was composed by her beloved late husband Prince Albert. The queen hadn't wanted a fuss, but was deeply moved by what she saw that day, writing: "No one ever, I believe, has met with such an ovation as was given to me, passing through those six miles of streets… The cheering was quite deafening and every face seemed to be filled with real joy." Ten years earlier she had experienced similar scenes of excitement during her Golden Jubilee. It was a rare public appearance for the 'widow of Windsor' who had retreated into isolation following Albert's untimely death in 1861. She marked the occasion privately with a breakfast under the trees of his final resting place in Frogmore before hosting a lavish royal banquet at the Palace for 50 foreign kings and princes, as well as heads of her colonies.

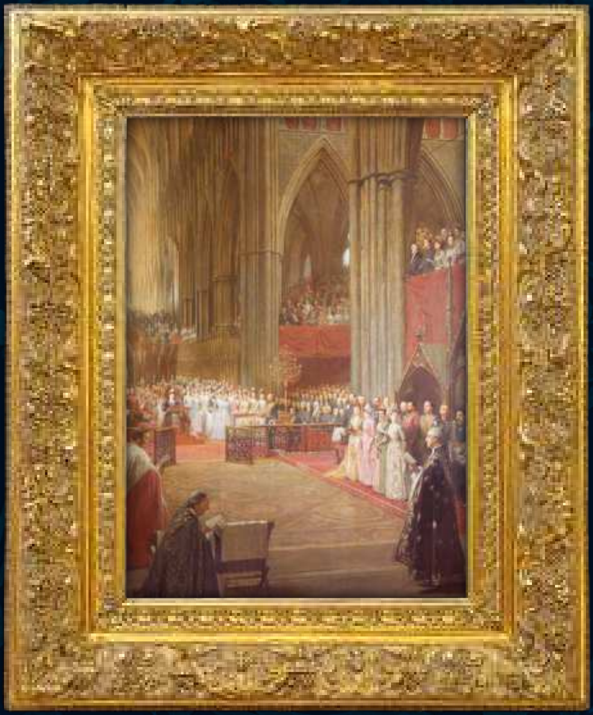
The next day she was escorted by the Indian cavalry to a ceremony at Westminster Abbey, where she had been crowned 50 years before. This time she refused to don the heavy golden headgear - only consenting to wearing a tiny crown on top of her mourning veil for the official photograph. For Victoria, jubilees were a time of mixed emotion, as she wrote on her diary: "The day has come and I am alone, though surrounded by many dear children…" But for the public whose affection she had broadly won over during her illustrious reign, it was a cause for celebration and to sing loudly God Save the Queen.

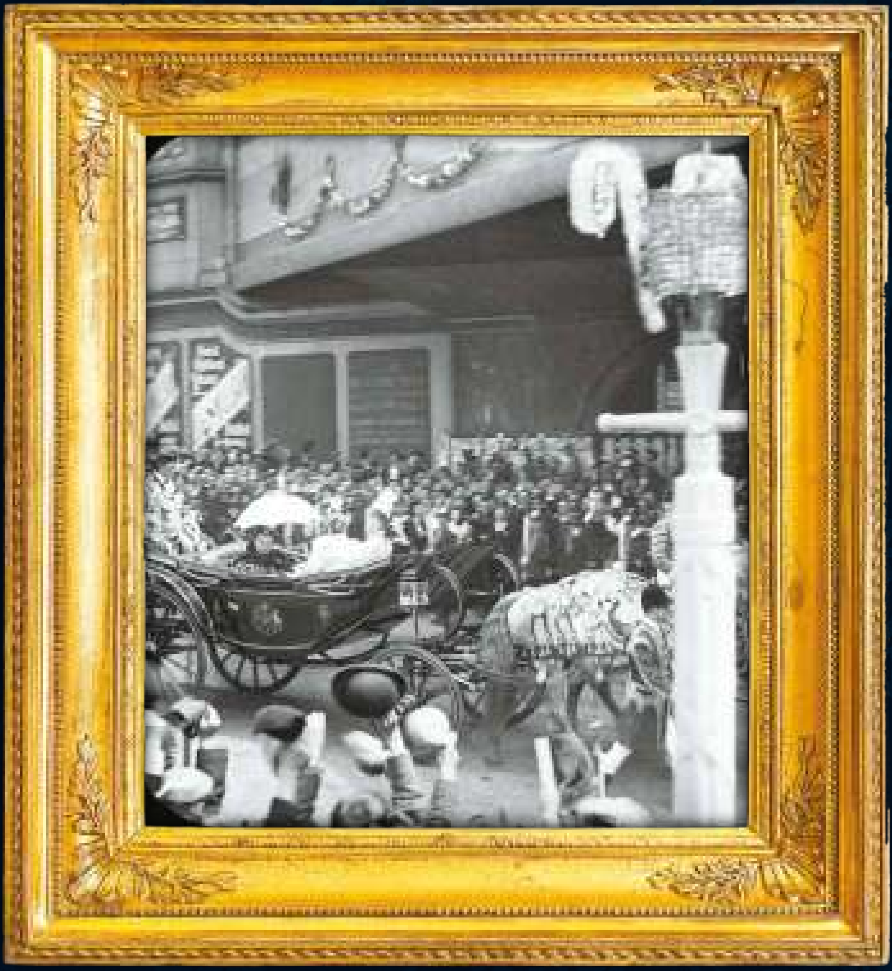
Long live the queen

Below: Portraits of the queen to celebrate her Golden Jubilee in 1887

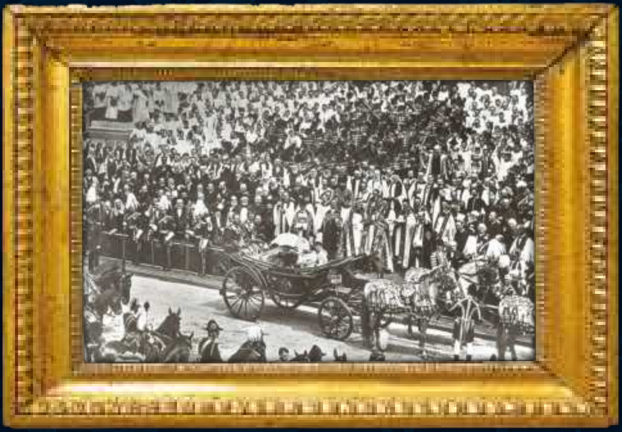


Below: A painting of the queen's Golden Jubilee thanksgiving service at Westminster Abbey



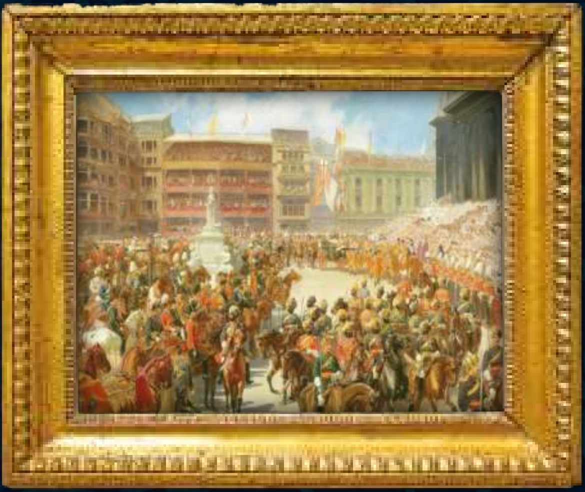


Above: Victoria's carriage rides past the cheering crowds during her Diamond Jubilee celebrations



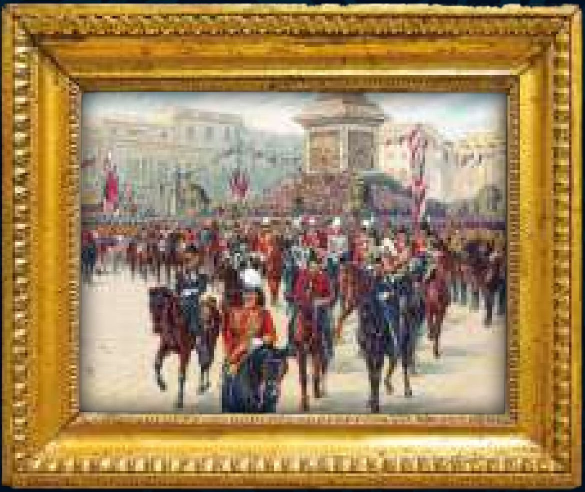
Above: Victoria, pictured outside St Paul's Cathedral. Her carriage was pulled by eight cream horses and she was accompanied by her third daughter, Helena; Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein and the Princess of Wales (later Queen Alexandra)

Right: A regiment of dragoons in the Diamond Jubilee procession on Borough High Street, London, returning to Buckingham Palace after a service outside St Paul's Cathedral



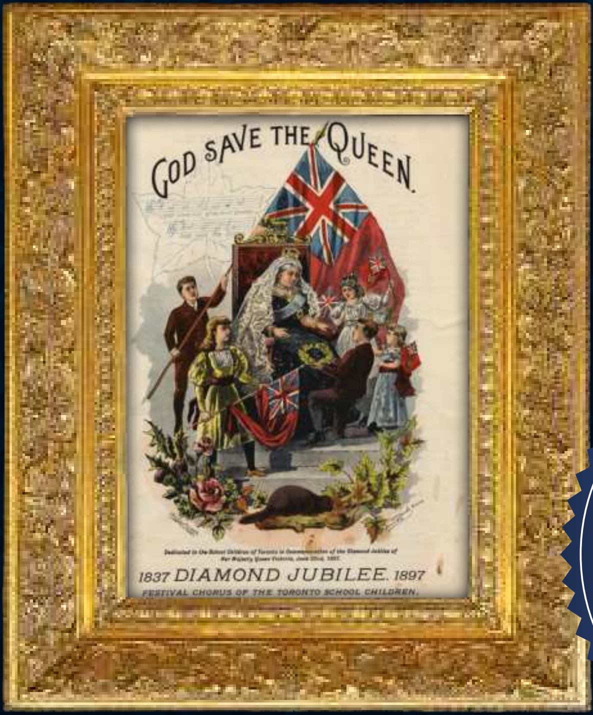
Left: Large crowds gatherd in the streets for a chance to see the queen in the procession

Below: A hand-coloured photograph of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee carriage



Left: The Golden Jubilee procession travelled through London escorted by members of the Indian cavalry

Below: Queen Victoria in Trafalgar Square during her Golden Jubilee celebrations



GOD SAVE THE QUEEN
1837 DIAMOND JUBILEE. 1897
FESTIVAL CHORUS OF THE TORONTO SCHOOL CHILDREN.

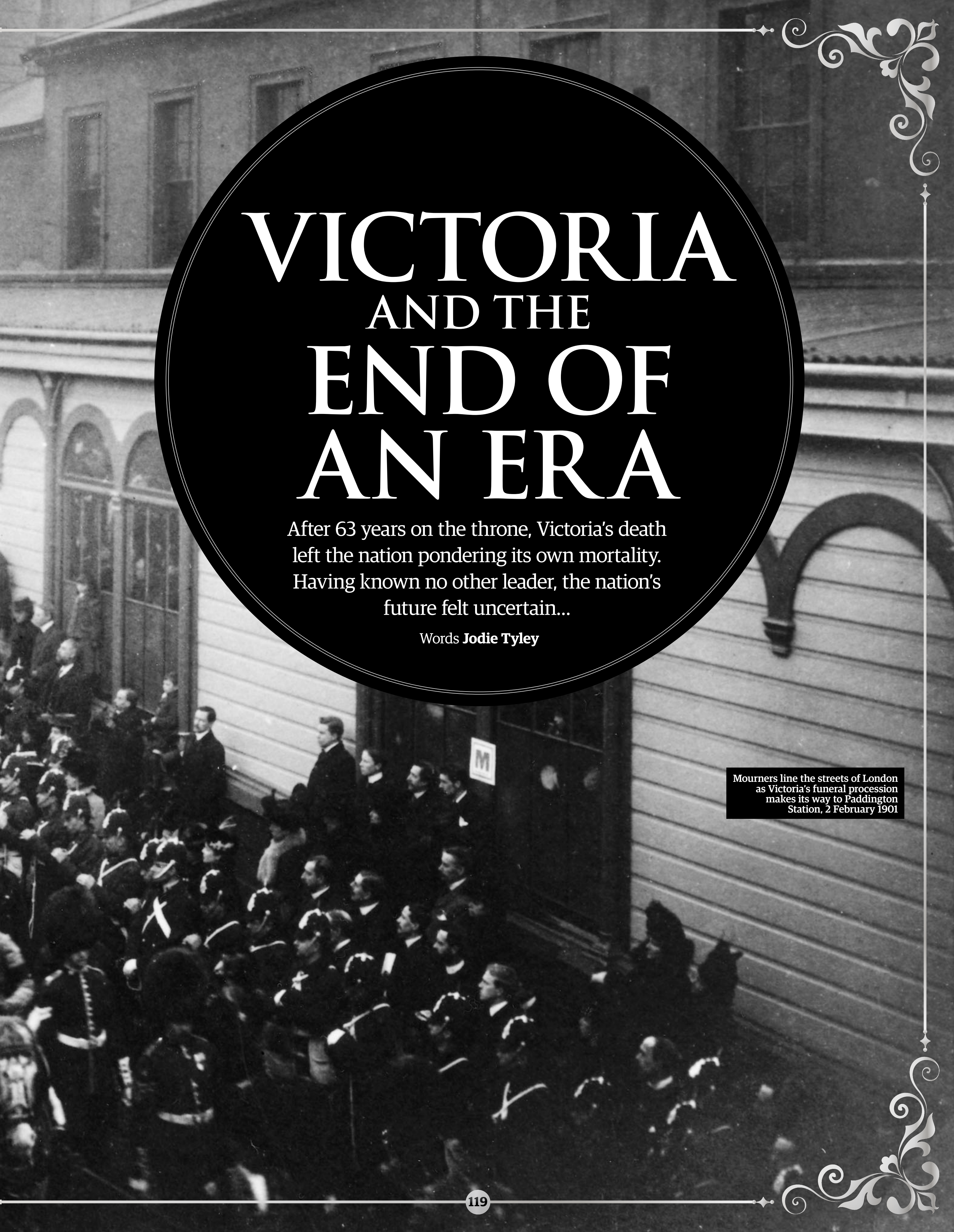
Left: The programme for an event in Toronto, Canada, to celebrate Victoria's Diamond Jubilee

To celebrate 60 years the queen sent a telegram across the world saying, "From my heart, I thank my beloved people. May God bless them!"

VICTORIA AND THE END OF AN ERA

After 63 years on the throne, Victoria's death left the nation pondering its own mortality. Having known no other leader, the nation's future felt uncertain…

Words **Jodie Tyley**



Mourners line the streets of London as Victoria's funeral procession makes its way to Paddington Station, 2 February 1901

Long live the queen

A mass of black-clothed mourners waited to say their last goodbyes to the queen who had served them devotedly for nearly 64 years - the second longest of any British monarch. An eerie silence hung over them like a shroud as people bowed their heads in sorrow, some shaking with grief and others from the bitter cold. The only sound came from the clopping of horses' hooves and the muffled gun salutes fired in Hyde Park, as the gun carriage passed. At the sight of the queen's coffin, it was as if a thousand mouths drew breath at once. Writer John Galsworthy described it as "a murmuring groan... So unconscious, so primitive, deep and wild... The queen was dead, and the air of the greatest city upon Earth grey with unshed tears."

From inside the queen's carriage, one of the two ladies-in-waiting, Edith, the Dowager Countess of Lytton, felt incredibly moved by the sight of the mourners. "The most heart and soul stirring thing I have seen," she wrote in a letter to her daughter. "[The Diamond] Jubilee can't compare with it to my mind because what was uppermost all the time was not the splendour of the show, but the intensity of loyal and devoted feeling, which seemed to fill every man and woman in that enormous, monotonously black crowd." The country hadn't witnessed a state funeral since the death of the Duke of Wellington in 1852, so court officials closely examined the details of royal protocol and rights of precedence while arranging the funeral procession.

The queen herself had left strict instructions, expressing that she wanted a 'white funeral', so

> *"The important thing is not what they think of me, but what I think of them"* – Queen Victoria

Queen Victoria in formal dress for the celebration of her Diamond Jubilee. She would only live another four years

HER FINAL REQUESTS

Queen Victoria had specific instructions for what should be placed in her coffin on the occasion of her death

Dressed in white

Victoria was clear that she was to wear white and have a white veil over her face, not black. It is noted in the recollections of many who attended that with the military in their traditional colours and many of the royal men in uniform also, only the princesses wore black to the funeral and stood out as a result.

Many rings

As well as her wedding ring, a diamond guard ring, and a ring that was a gift from her mother, Victoria had many other rings of varied significance. She particularly noted her engagement ring with an emerald in the head of a golden snake, which she said matched one Albert was also buried with that she gave to him.

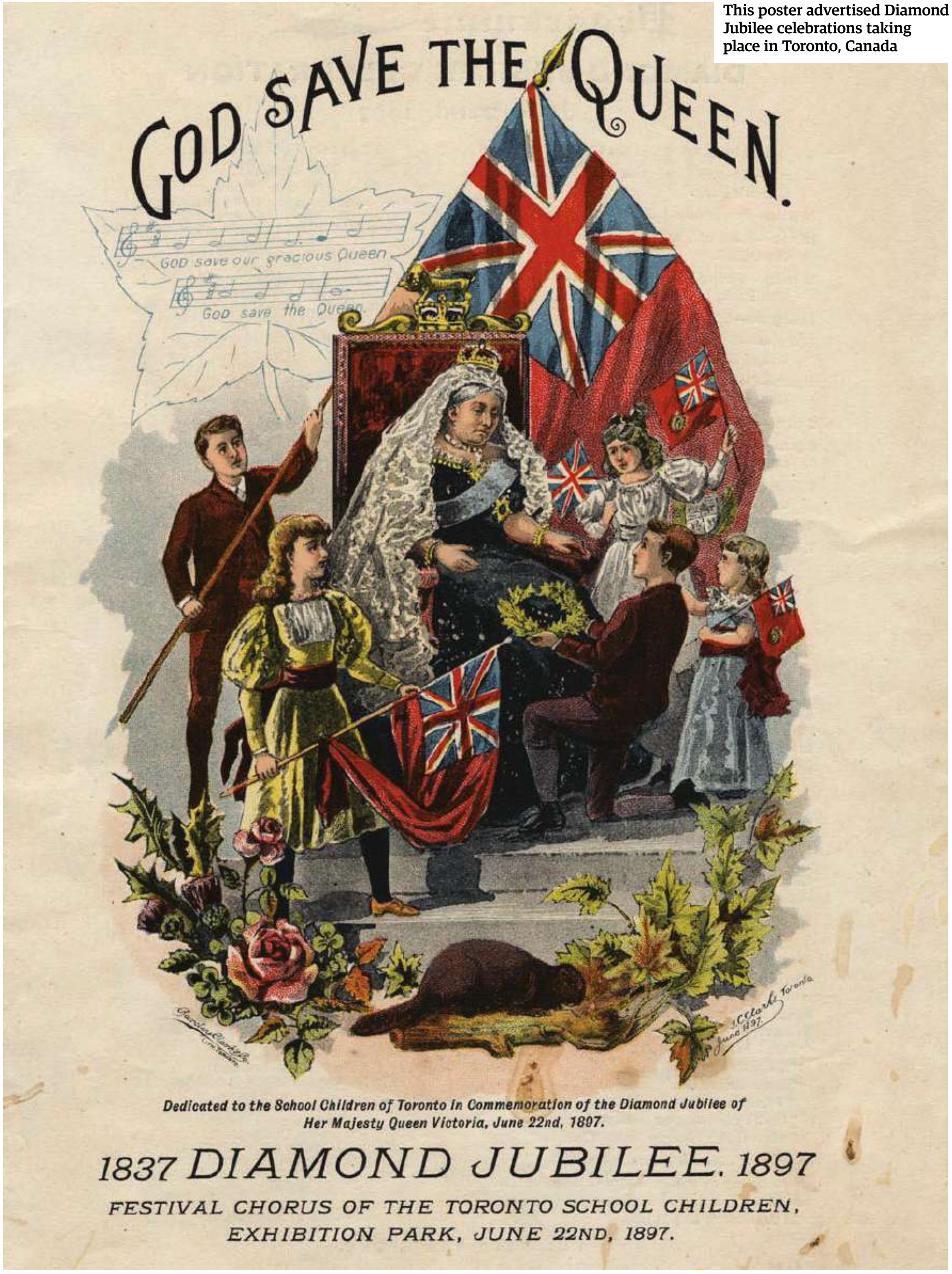
Remembering Albert

As well as her wedding and engagement rings and other gifts of jewellery that Albert had given Victoria, she wished for a cast of his hand to be buried with her. She also wanted one of his pocket handkerchiefs, a dressing gown and cloak worked for him by their second daughter, Princess Alice buried with her.

Remembering John Brown

Victoria asked for a number of items relating to her good friend John Brown. She asked for a gold wedding ring to be buried with her that had belonged to Brown's own mother and she had worn since his death. She also asked for a photo of Brown in a leather case with his hair to be placed in her hand.

London was draped with purple crepe - the colour of royalty - and white satin bows. Victoria wore a white dress and her wedding veil, despite wearing nothing but black for the 40 years she spent as the so-called Widow of Windsor. Numerous mementos were placed inside the coffin with her: Albert's dressing gown and a plaster cast of his hand, jewellery, photographs as well as a picture of her good friend and faithful servant John Brown, a lock of his hair and his mother's wedding ring - Victoria's physician Sir James Reid saw to it that these last few items were concealed from the family's view. It was to be a military funeral, with eight white horses and a white and gold satin pall over her coffin. The carriage drive through the capital came to an end at Paddington Station, in preparation for the final stage to Windsor. But it was at Windsor where the long journey to the queen's final resting place faltered. While waiting for the funeral procession to begin once more, the artillery horses grew restless. They reared and kicked, proving unable to draw the gun carriage, so the naval guard of honour quickly made alternative arrangements. A communication cord was turned into an impromptu harness and the sailors


GOD SAVE THE QUEEN.
God save our gracious Queen
God save the Queen
J.C. Clarke Toronto June 1897
Dedicated to the School Children of Toronto in Commemoration of the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, June 22nd, 1897.
1837 DIAMOND JUBILEE. 1897
FESTIVAL CHORUS OF THE TORONTO SCHOOL CHILDREN,
EXHIBITION PARK, JUNE 22ND, 1897.

This poster advertised Diamond Jubilee celebrations taking place in Toronto, Canada

THE QUEEN'S LAST JOURNEY

Victoria's path to burial was carefully planned, but not without mishaps

1st February, Osborne House, Isle Of Wight

A short service is held at Osborne House with the family of Queen Victoria before the coffin is placed on a gun carriage to begin its journey. The queen's coffin is taken by carriage to the HMY Alberta at Trinity Pier on the River Medina where it would be transported across the Solent to Gosport, Portsmouth, passing the British fleet on the way, lining the journey from Cowes to Portsmouth as it fired a salute. Vessels from Germany and France were also present to see the queen off. The Alberta is lead by six torpedo destroyers.

2nd February, Portsmouth

The coffin of the queen is loaded onto a train at Portsmouth to be taken to Victoria Station in London. Green wreaths have been placed on 800 lampposts along the route, following a suggestion by one Etta Close from Eaton Square, covering the 3.5 miles between the stations. The procession passes by Buckingham palace, Hyde Park and Marble Arch, supported by members of every branch of the military, the gun carriage drawn by white horses and the coffin itself draped in white and gold silks. Arriving at Paddington, the coffin is place in Queen Victoria's Royal carriage to be conveyed to Windsor along with members of her family and dignitaries. From Windsor Station the procession begins again from the station, down High Street and Park Street before finally pausing the journey at St George's Chapel at Windsor Castle. Along the way the horses began acting up and sailors ended up pulling the gun carriage themselves, a suggestion made by Prince Louis of Battenberg and taken up by Sir Frederick Ponsonby.

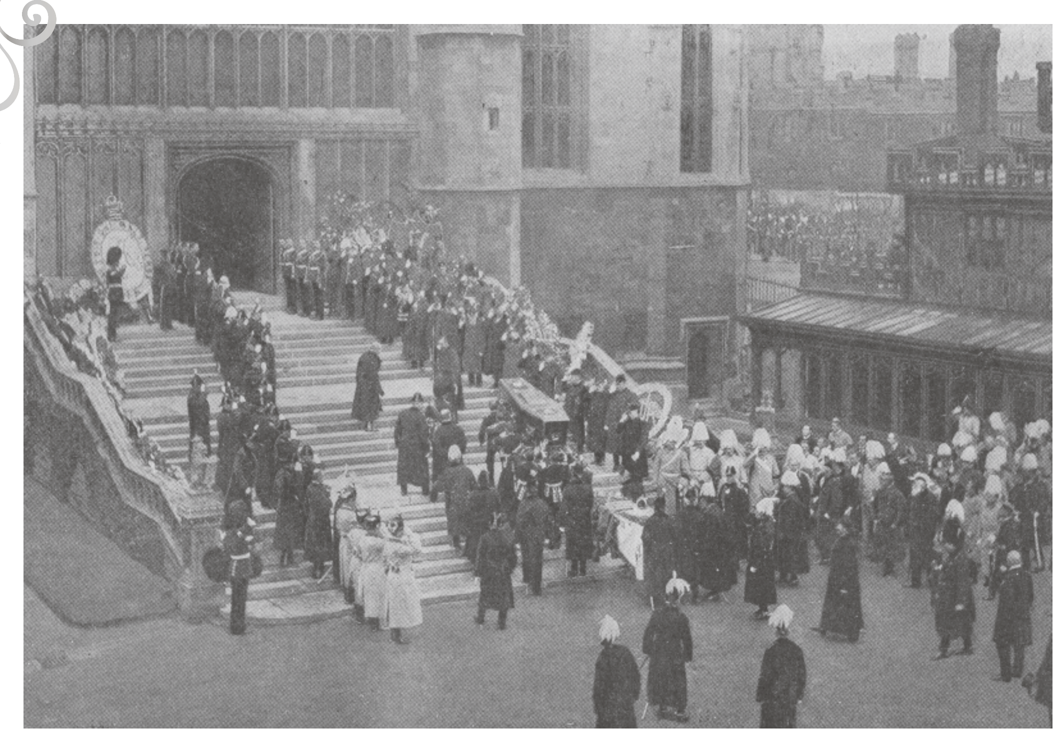
3rd February, Windsor

A service is held for the royal family and invited guests at St George's Chapel.

4th February, Windsor

The procession begins anew with the gun carriage to Frogmore Mausoleum, built at the request of Queen Victoria herself for her late husband Prince Albert. Above the doors were inscribed, "Vale Desideratissime. Farewell most beloved. Here at length I shall rest with thee, with thee in Christ I shall rise again."

> "London was draped with purple crepe - the colour of royalty - and white satin bows"



on guard at the station pulled the queen's funeral carriage instead. Ever since that day, it became a tradition for sailors to pull the coffin along the processional route in State funerals.

The service took place at St George's Chapel at Windsor Castle, in a private ceremony with the new King, Edward VII, the queen's family and royalty from around the world. Victoria had 37 great grandchildren, whose marriages with other monarchies earned her the nickname of 'the grandmother of Europe'.

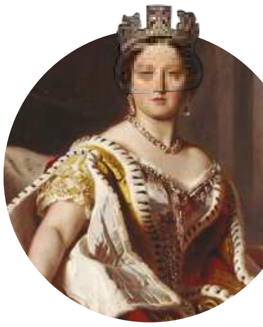
After lying in state for two days, the queen was finally buried next to Albert at the Frogmore Mausoleum at Windsor Great Park. Throughout her long widowhood, she had always maintained her desire to be with him again. Shortly before he died, Albert reassured her, "We don't know in what state we shall meet again; but that we shall recognise each other and be together in eternity I am perfectly certain." And above the Mausoleum door was inscribed Victoria's words, "Farewell best beloved, here at last I shall rest with thee, with thee in Christ I shall rise again." The queen was 81 when she died, making her the then longest reigning monarch. Before her, that accolade had belonged to her grandfather, King George III. Ten years of mental illness had forced him to retire from public life, but Victoria was strong throughout - so was the public's loyalty. This was never more apparent than at her Diamond Jubilee, where subjects from all parts of the Empire assembled to celebrate, including 11 colonial prime ministers. There was a sense of imperial wonder as Victoria journeyed through London; she later wrote in her journal, "No one ever, I believe, has met with such an ovation as was given to me, passing through those six miles of streets… The cheering was quite deafening and every face seemed to be filled with real joy." Fast-forward four years and the news of the queen's death had filled London with shock and sadness. When the government and her family got wind of her illness, the news was deliberately withheld from the public for over a week. It was a testament to the impact she had had since her ascension to the throne, at a time when the Crown was tarnished by the public scandals of her predecessors. Victoria was the only child of Princess Victoria of Saxe-Coburg and Edward Duke of Kent and became queen at just 18 years old. Her uncle George IV and his brothers, the Duke of Clarence and the Duke of Kent (Victoria's father), were bigamists and fathered many children out of wedlock, causing public outrage. The Reform Act of 1932 had passed the powers of the monarch to Parliament, and there were even calls to abolish the royal institution completely, but Victoria won the people's loyalty against all odds.

> *"We are not interested in the possibilities of defeat; they do not exist"*
> – Queen Victoria, speaking about the Boer War

Timeline of Queen Victoria's life

24 May 1819
A future queen is born
Alexandrina Victoria is born at Kensington Palace to Edward Duke of Kent and Princess Victoria of Saxe-Saalfeld-Coburg. When her father dies the following January, she becomes heir to the throne.

28 June 1838
Coronation
A year after the death of King William IV, Princess Victoria becomes queen. At just 19 years old, she was crowned at Westminster Abbey and 400,000 visitors travel to London to witness it. Shouts of "God save the Queen" ring through the air.



10 February 1840
The Big Day
When the queen marries Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, it marked the first wedding of a reigning queen in England since Bloody Mary almost 300 years before. The ceremony is held at the Chapel Royal, St James's Palace.

21 November 1840
First child
The happily married couple welcome their first born child into the world, Victoria Adelaide Mary Louisa (known as Vicky). She would marry Prince Frederik William of Prussia and become Empress of Germany.

1851
The Great Exhibition
Prince Albert is the brains behind this event in the purpose-built Crystal Palace in London, celebrating the great advances of the British industrial age. The profits would go into establishing the South Kensington museums complex in West London.

1857
Prince Consort
The Royal couple have their ninth child, Princess Beatrice, and this same year, Albert is formally recognised by the nation when he is awarded the title of the Prince Consort.

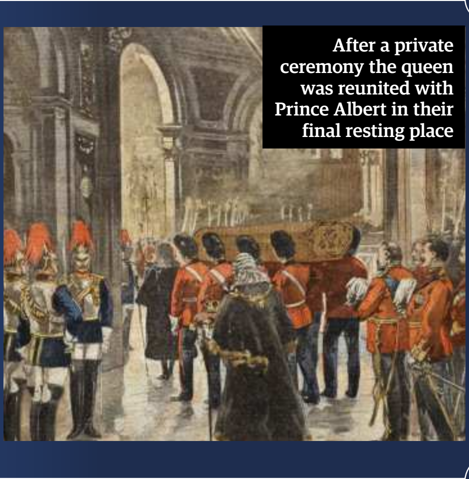
QUEEN VICTORIA'S FUNERAL

2 February 1901

Following her death, the queen lay in state in the dining room at Osborne House, where the air was heavy with the scent of lilies. Lying in state is a tradition where the coffin is placed on view so the public can pay their respects - but she requested that it would not be public. After eight days, her coffin was taken to the royal yacht, Alberta, on 1 February 1901. It journeyed across The Solent to Portsmouth, while battleships and cruisers boomed salutes on either side and crowds of mourners covered the Southsea Common and the beach.

The next day, the coffin was taken by train to Victoria station and began its procession by gun carriage across London. King Edward VII and the Kaiser led the way, as thousands of people braved the bitter winter's day to watch. At Paddington station, the coffin was transported to Windsor - the last leg of the journey.

When it arrived in the afternoon, the town was overflowing with people. Here, sailors pulled the gun carriage up the hill to St George's Chapel. After a private ceremony, the queen was reunited with her beloved Prince Albert in their final resting place: the Royal Mausoleum at Frogmore.



After a private ceremony the queen was reunited with Prince Albert in their final resting place

> "The sailors on guard at the station pulled the queen's funeral carriage. Ever since that day, it became a tradition for sailors to pull the coffin in State funerals"

In 1840, she married her cousin Albert Saxe-Coburg and over 17 years she had given birth to four boys and five girls. Paintings and photographs of the devoted couple surrounded by their brood appealed to the family values of the growing middle class, while having legitimate children also assured the royal line, which her predecessors had failed to do. That's not to say everyone liked her and, in fact, there were seven assassination attempts during her reign. Popularity also took a downturn when Prince Albert died and, in her all-consuming grief, she was seen as neglecting her duties to her subjects. What was the point of a monarchy who had seemed to disappear before their eyes?

After almost a decade of isolation, Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli urged Victoria to begin making public appearances again, and by the time of her Golden Jubilee in 1887, she had regained the respect and love of her country and overseas. In 1857, the government of India was transferred to the United Kingdom following the Indian Rebellion and in 1877 Victoria was given the title Empress of India. Celebrations were held in Delhi, led by Viceroy of India Lord Lytton, who presented the Indian princes with their own coats of arms and read a telegraph that had come from Victoria herself. These grand festivities marked Britain's imperial status as a global force to be reckoned with.

Her long reign saw Britain became an empire on which the sun never set. Queen Victoria was seen as having played an active role and towns, rivers and cities were named after her; such was the sense of national pride in their matriarchal figurehead. When she died, the great Victorian age died with her, as The Times wrote, "to write the life of Queen Victoria is to relate the history of Great Britain during a period of great events... An unexampled national prosperity."

> *"Great events make me quiet and calm; it is only trifles that irritate my nerves"* - Victoria in a letter to King Leopold of Belgium

It wasn't just her home nation that was left numb from the shock of her death. In Kolkata, India, the Victoria Memorial Hospital was opened, largely financed by the British Indian merchants who wanted to show their appreciation for the free trade and peace enjoyed under British protection during her reign.

In Canada, the people went into mourning. The Mail and Empire newspaper in Toronto wrote, "The private and personal concern was more touching than any public or ceremonial expression of grief. It showed, as no ceremony could, how near the queen was to the hearts of her people, and how the thought of her had become part of the routine of life."

Flags hung at half-mast and shop windows were draped in black.

The queen was called the Mother of Confederation after Canada became a unified state

- **14 December 1861**
  Prince Albert dies
  Aged just 42, Prince Albert dies of typhoid fever. In her journal, the queen recalls the depths of her despair. When he is buried nine days later, she is too grief-stricken to attend the funeral. Victoria is lost in a period of mourning, which is expected to last 12 months, but continues for many more years.

- **13 October 1863**
  First public re-appearance
  The queen abandons her public duties following the death of her husband. She doesn't appear publicly until 1863, when she unveils a statue of Albert in Aberdeen.

- **1866**
  New friendships
  The mid-1960s see Victoria gain a close friend in Scottish servant John Brown. He was rough, enjoyed a drink and treated the queen surprisingly informally. He was even overheard calling her "woman"!

- **1877**
  Empress of India
  After catastrophic moves made by the East India Company spark mutiny, Britain seizes control of India. Prime Minister Disraeli swiftly secures the title Empress of India for his beloved queen.

- **1887**
  The Golden Jubilee
  The queen celebrates 50 years with a quiet breakfast under the trees at Frogmore, the resting place of Prince Albert. She then travels to London for a royal banquet and on the following day, leads a procession through the city.

- **1897**
  The Diamond Jubilee
  The 60th anniversary is celebrated with a thanksgiving service outside St Paul's, as the queen is too frail to climb the steps. Crowds of people flood the streets and Victoria wrote of the event in her journal: "I was much moved."

- **22 January 1901**
  Victoria dies
  The queen dies at her estate, Osborne House, on the Isle of Wight. Victoria is 81 years old and has served as queen for almost 64 years. She dies surrounded by her children and grandchildren.

© Getty

> “For many, Victoria’s death symbolised the decline of the Empire, but people from all across the Empire would celebrate being part of it”

on 1 July 1867. “I believe it will make [the provinces] great and prosperous”, she told Sir Charles Tupper, one of the principal fathers of Confederation. Main roads in Canadian communities were named after her and the queen’s Birthday became a national holiday. It became known as Victoria Day in 1901, and is still celebrated in memory of the great queen. John Diefenbaker, the 13th prime minister of Canada, recalled the reaction on the day of her death in his memoirs: “When Queen Victoria died, Father regarded it as one of the most calamitous events of all time. Would the world ever be the same? I can see him now. When he came home to tell us the news, he broke down and cried.”

On the other side of the world, Australia wept too. Like Britain, Australia had experienced population growth and an increase in wealth during her time, so Victoria was well-loved. On 9 July 1900, she had declared the Commonwealth of Australia to come into being on 1 January 1901, unifying the Australian colonies. She died shortly after the celebrations, at the height of her popularity.

“Millions who have never seen the face of the dead queen honour and revere her memory throughout the length and breadth of the entire civilised world,” read the next day’s announcement in the Herald, an Australian newspaper. “In all stages of her history the imaginations were captured.

Whether as Virgin Queen, or happy wife and mother or afflicted widow, Queen Victoria has appealed to us all as a great queen and a noble woman.”

In Australia, the names given to two colonies during the 19th century - Victoria and Queensland - were retained even after they achieved statehood, but the relationship between Australia and Britain was beginning to show signs of weakening.

For many, Victoria’s death would become symbolic of the British Empire’s decline, and for more than 50 years after her demise, people from all across the Empire would celebrate being a part of it. This occasion was known as Empire Day and - according to New Zealand newspaper Oamaru Mail on the eve of their first celebration - it served “the dual purpose

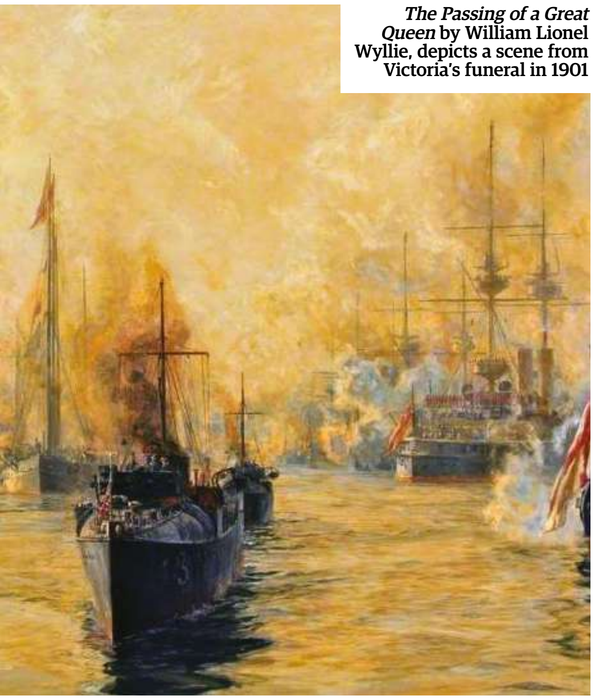
> *“Another year begun, I am feeling so weak & unwell, that I enter upon it sadly”* - Victoria’s diary entry, just days before her death

KAISER WILHELM

A man at war with himself

The son of Queen Victoria’s eldest daughter Vicky, Kaiser Wilhelm II was meant to be the heir that would strengthen the bonds between Britain and Germany. Instead, he ended up forging such a love-hate relationship with the nation, that he would declare war. A difficult birth had left him with a paralysed left arm and stunted growth that Princess Vicky was determined to cure. From having his arm inserted into a freshly slaughtered hare to daily electrotherapy treatments, the Kaiser was forced to endure a tormented childhood. By the age of 16, he had developed a twisted love for his mother. Uncovered letters revealed fantasies about kissing her hand in an erotic fashion, which some historians believe was his desperate plea for acceptance. Her response talked about politics and music - anything but his fantasies - and he didn’t reply. Their relationship was over and the Kaiser developed a hatred of his English roots. When he started expanding the German navy, Britain started to worry. He gave an interview to The Daily Telegraph as an olive branch, but only made things worse when he let slip: “You English are mad, mad, mad as March hares.” Following World War I, Kaiser Wilhelm was forced to abdicate on 9 November 1918, fleeing the country with his family to live out his days in Holland.

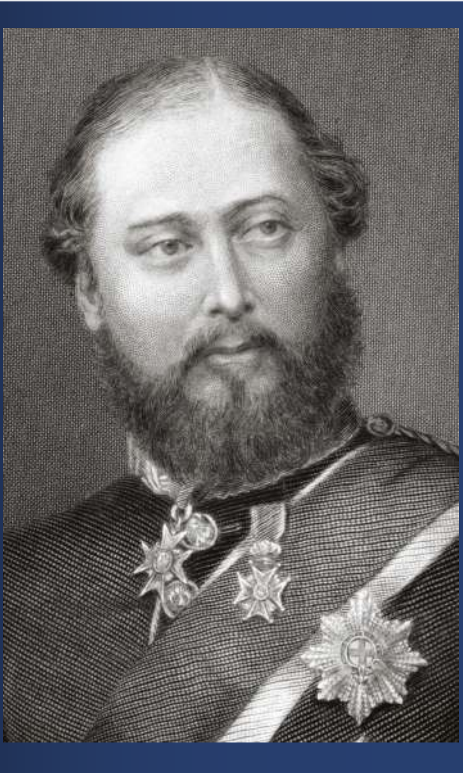
Kaiser Wilhelm II strides his way through Queen Victoria’s funeral on his white horse



The Passing of a Great Queen by William Lionel Wyllie, depicts a scene from Victoria's funeral in 1901

EDWARD VII

The playboy Prince of Wales



The eldest son of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert was known to his family as Bertie. He was also known as a disappointment. His poor performance during home tutoring and interest in eating, drinking and women earned him a reputation as a playboy prince. Victoria even remarked: "Handsome I cannot think him, with that painfully small and narrow head, those immense features and total want of chin."

Their relationship became even more fraught when Albert visited his son at Cambridge and went for a walk in the rain. He returned sick, bed-bound and dead within three weeks. It was probably due to typhoid, but Edward's mother forever blamed him for her beloved's death. "I never can or shall look at him without a shudder," she wrote. Consequently, when he became the King, he had never received an ounce of wisdom or preparation for the job from his dear mother. Despite playing a role in the lead-up to World War I - by expanding the Royal Navy to compete with Germany - the Edwardian period is seen as an age of peace and prosperity, especially for the upper class.

> "When Edward VII died in 1910, his funeral was a parade of royalty from all over Europe and was the last of its kind"

of keeping fresh and green the memory of a most illustrious reign and rejoicing in the consolidation of our great Empire." School children would sing songs like *Jerusalem* and *God Save The Queen*, listen to stories about brave warriors and pioneers from across the Empire and then leave school early to join marches, maypole dances and parties. One New Zealand school journal from 1922 contained a poem that summed up the event nicely: "Our Union Jack, on Empire Day, floats proudly in the breeze; not here alone, but far away, in lands across the seas. Wherever British children dwell, or British folk may be, on Empire Day our flag shall tell that we are Britons free…" In Australia, the festivities were more commonly known as Cracker Night, which was celebrated with bonfires and fireworks.

However, as the Empire began to weaken in the 1950s and countries started to revel in their own identity, this anniversary fell out of favour. It was later re-branded as Commonwealth Day, and the date was changed from 24 May to the second Monday in March. Queen Elizabeth II still sends a special message to the countries of the Commonwealth via radio broadcast on this date. In a recent address, she warned that "when common goals fall apart, so does the exchange of ideas. And if people no longer trust or understand each other, the talking will soon stop too," she continued. "Not only are there tremendous rewards for this cooperation, but through dialogue we protect ourselves against the dangers that can so easily arise from a failure to talk or to see the other person's point of view." And there was certainly a lack of dialogue and understanding between England and Germany when the frosty relationship between the two rulers led to an intense rivalry that would steer them towards the Great War.

When Edward VII died in 1910, his funeral was a parade of royalty from all over Europe. The nine reigning European kings assembled at Buckingham Palace looking unified in their military regalia and extravagant facial hair. It would have seemed to anyone that blood was thicker than bombs, but that illusion was soon shattered. By 1914, three crowned cousins were at war, with King George V of Great Britain and Tsar Nicholas II of Russia on one side, and the German Kaiser on the other in a conflict that would leave only four kings still on their thrones. While the Kaiser signed the papers sanctioning mobilisation of the German armed forces, he lamented, "To think George and Nicky (the Tsar) should have played me for false! If my grandmother had been alive, she would never have allowed it."

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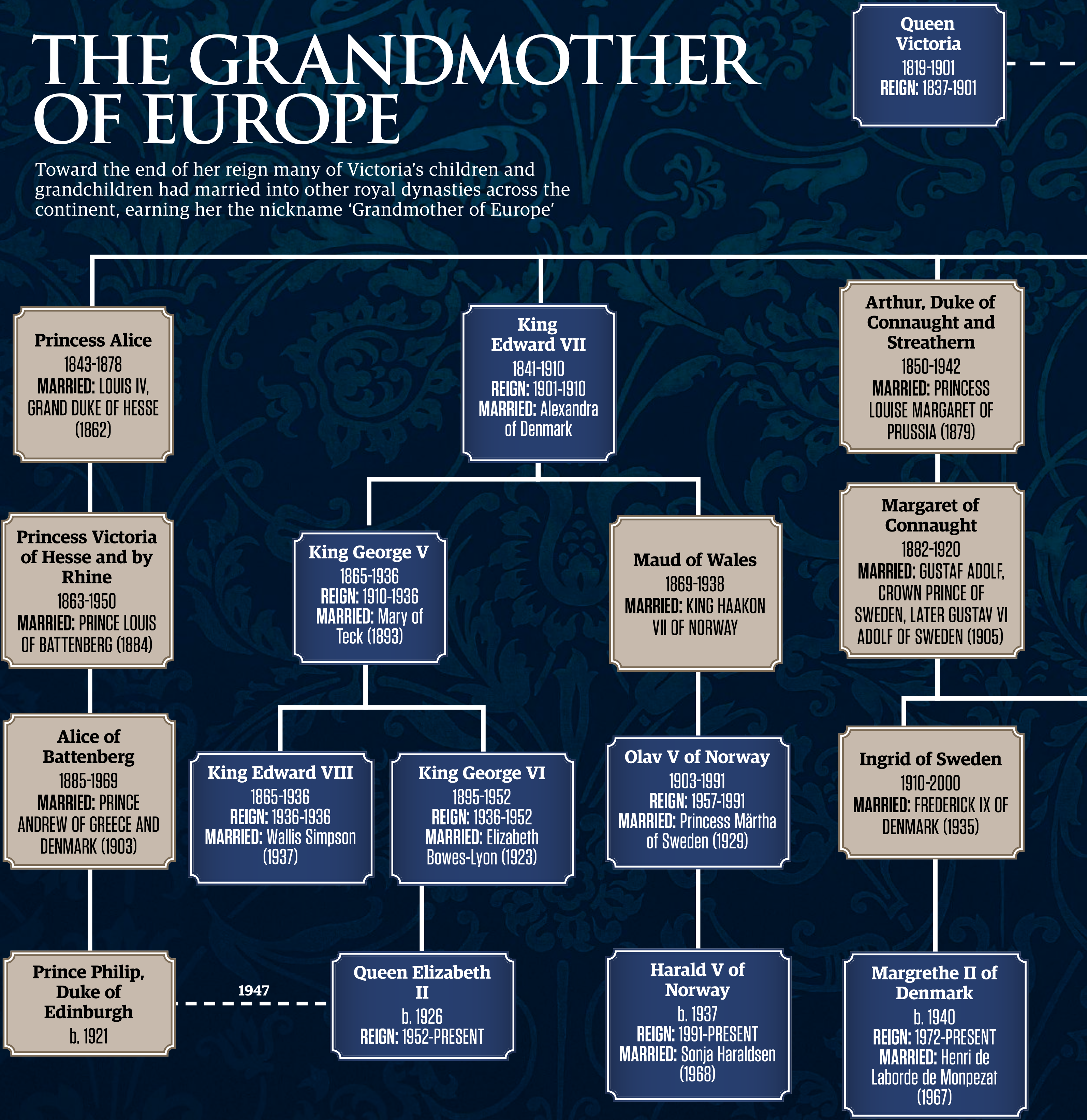
THE GRANDMOTHER OF EUROPE

Toward the end of her reign many of Victoria's children and grandchildren had married into other royal dynasties across the continent, earning her the nickname 'Grandmother of Europe'



Queen Victoria
1819-1901
REIGN: 1837-1901

Princess Alice
1843-1878
MARRIED: LOUIS IV, GRAND DUKE OF HESSE (1862)

Princess Victoria of Hesse and by Rhine
1863-1950
MARRIED: PRINCE LOUIS OF BATTENBERG (1884)

Alice of Battenberg
1885-1969
MARRIED: PRINCE ANDREW OF GREECE AND DENMARK (1903)

Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh
b. 1921

1947

King Edward VII
1841-1910
REIGN: 1901-1910
MARRIED: Alexandra of Denmark

King George V
1865-1936
REIGN: 1910-1936
MARRIED: Mary of Teck (1893)

King Edward VIII
1865-1936
REIGN: 1936-1936
MARRIED: Wallis Simpson (1937)

King George VI
1895-1952
REIGN: 1936-1952
MARRIED: Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon (1923)

Queen Elizabeth II
b. 1926
REIGN: 1952-PRESENT

Maud of Wales
1869-1938
MARRIED: KING HAAKON VII OF NORWAY

Olav V of Norway
1903-1991
REIGN: 1957-1991
MARRIED: Princess Märtha of Sweden (1929)

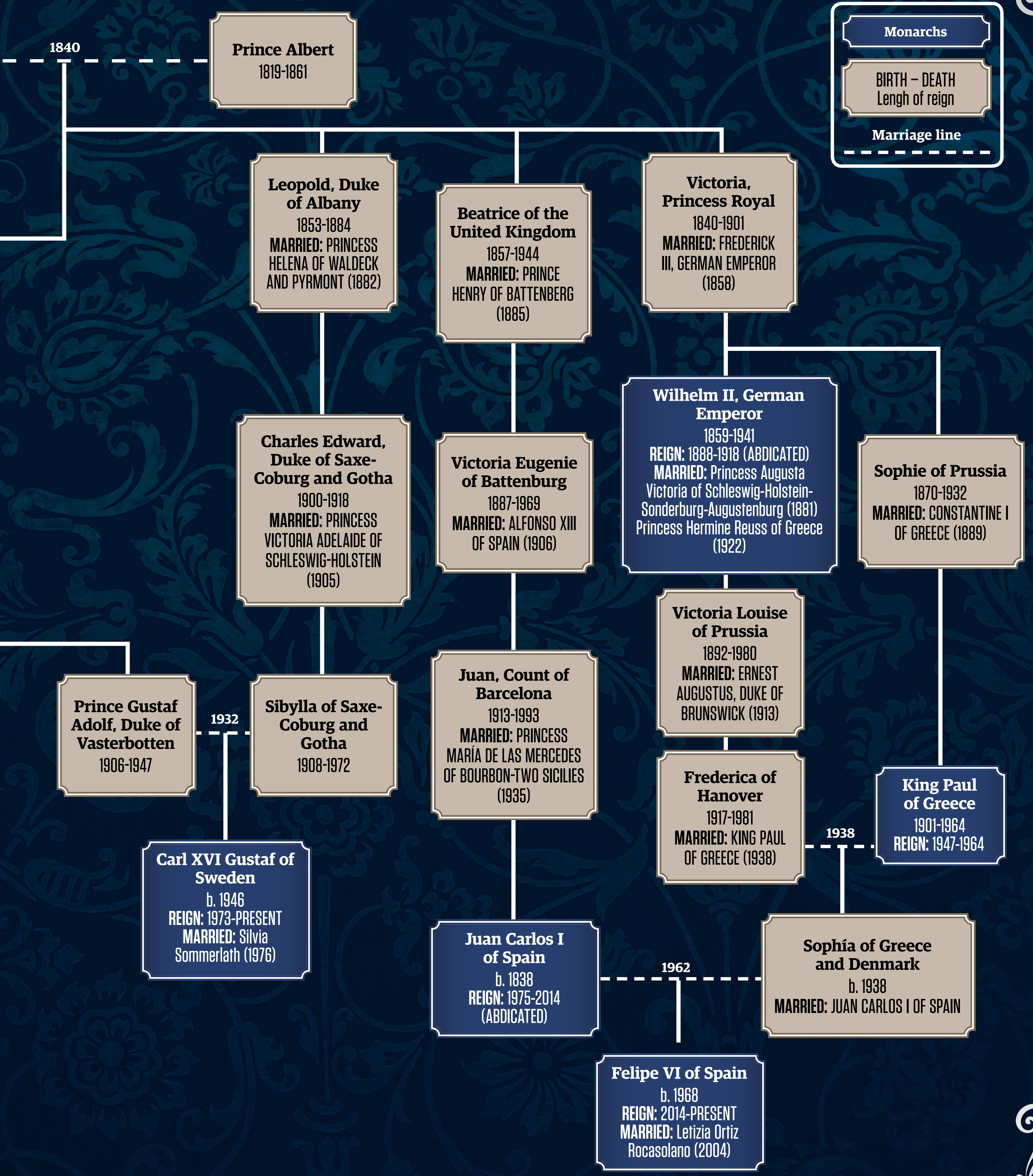
Harald V of Norway
b. 1937
REIGN: 1991-PRESENT
MARRIED: Sonja Haraldsen (1968)

Arthur, Duke of Connaught and Streathern
1850-1942
MARRIED: PRINCESS LOUISE MARGARET OF PRUSSIA (1879)

Margaret of Connaught
1882-1920
MARRIED: GUSTAF ADOLF, CROWN PRINCE OF SWEDEN, LATER GUSTAV VI ADOLF OF SWEDEN (1905)

Ingrid of Sweden
1910-2000
MARRIED: FREDERICK IX OF DENMARK (1935)

Margrethe II of Denmark
b. 1940
REIGN: 1972-PRESENT
MARRIED: Henri de Laborde de Monpezat (1967)



Monarchs

BIRTH – DEATH
Lengh of reign

Marriage line

1840

Prince Albert
1819-1861

Leopold, Duke of Albany
1853-1884
MARRIED: PRINCESS HELENA OF WALDECK AND PYRMONT (1882)

Beatrice of the United Kingdom
1857-1944
MARRIED: PRINCE HENRY OF BATTENBERG (1885)

Victoria, Princess Royal
1840-1901
MARRIED: FREDERICK III, GERMAN EMPEROR (1858)

Wilhelm II, German Emperor
1859-1941
REIGN: 1888-1918 (ABDICATED)
MARRIED: Princess Augusta Victoria of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Augustenburg (1881) Princess Hermine Reuss of Greece (1922)

Charles Edward, Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha
1900-1918
MARRIED: PRINCESS VICTORIA ADELAIDE OF SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN (1905)

Victoria Eugenie of Battenburg
1887-1969
MARRIED: ALFONSO XIII OF SPAIN (1906)

Sophie of Prussia
1870-1932
MARRIED: CONSTANTINE I OF GREECE (1889)

Victoria Louise of Prussia
1892-1980
MARRIED: ERNEST AUGUSTUS, DUKE OF BRUNSWICK (1913)

Prince Gustaf Adolf, Duke of Vasterbotten
1906-1947

1932

Sibylla of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha
1908-1972

Juan, Count of Barcelona
1913-1993
MARRIED: PRINCESS MARÍA DE LAS MERCEDES OF BOURBON-TWO SICILIES (1935)

Frederica of Hanover
1917-1981
MARRIED: KING PAUL OF GREECE (1938)

1938

King Paul of Greece
1901-1964
REIGN: 1947-1964

Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden
b. 1946
REIGN: 1973-PRESENT
MARRIED: Silvia Sommerlath (1976)

Juan Carlos I of Spain
b. 1838
REIGN: 1975-2014 (ABDICATED)

1962

Sophía of Greece and Denmark
b. 1938
MARRIED: JUAN CARLOS I OF SPAIN

Felipe VI of Spain
b. 1968
REIGN: 2014-PRESENT
MARRIED: Letizia Ortiz Rocasolano (2004)

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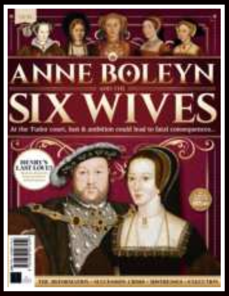
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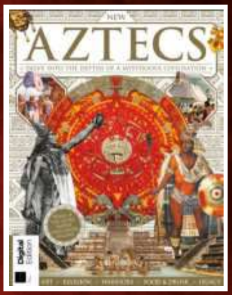

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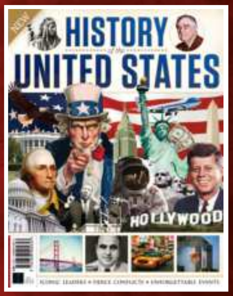
TUDORS

NEW
GEORGIANS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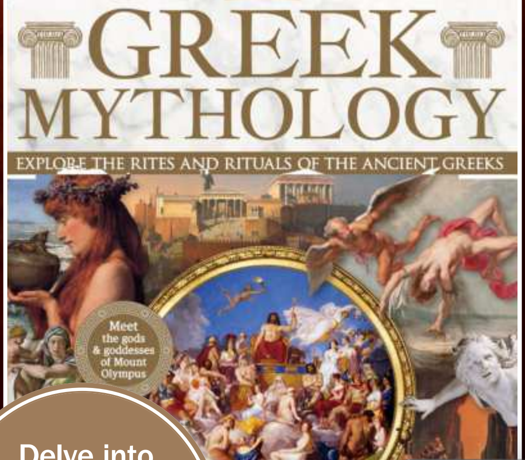
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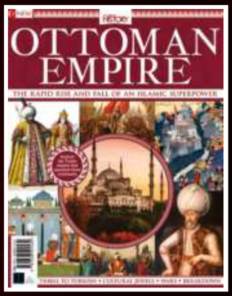
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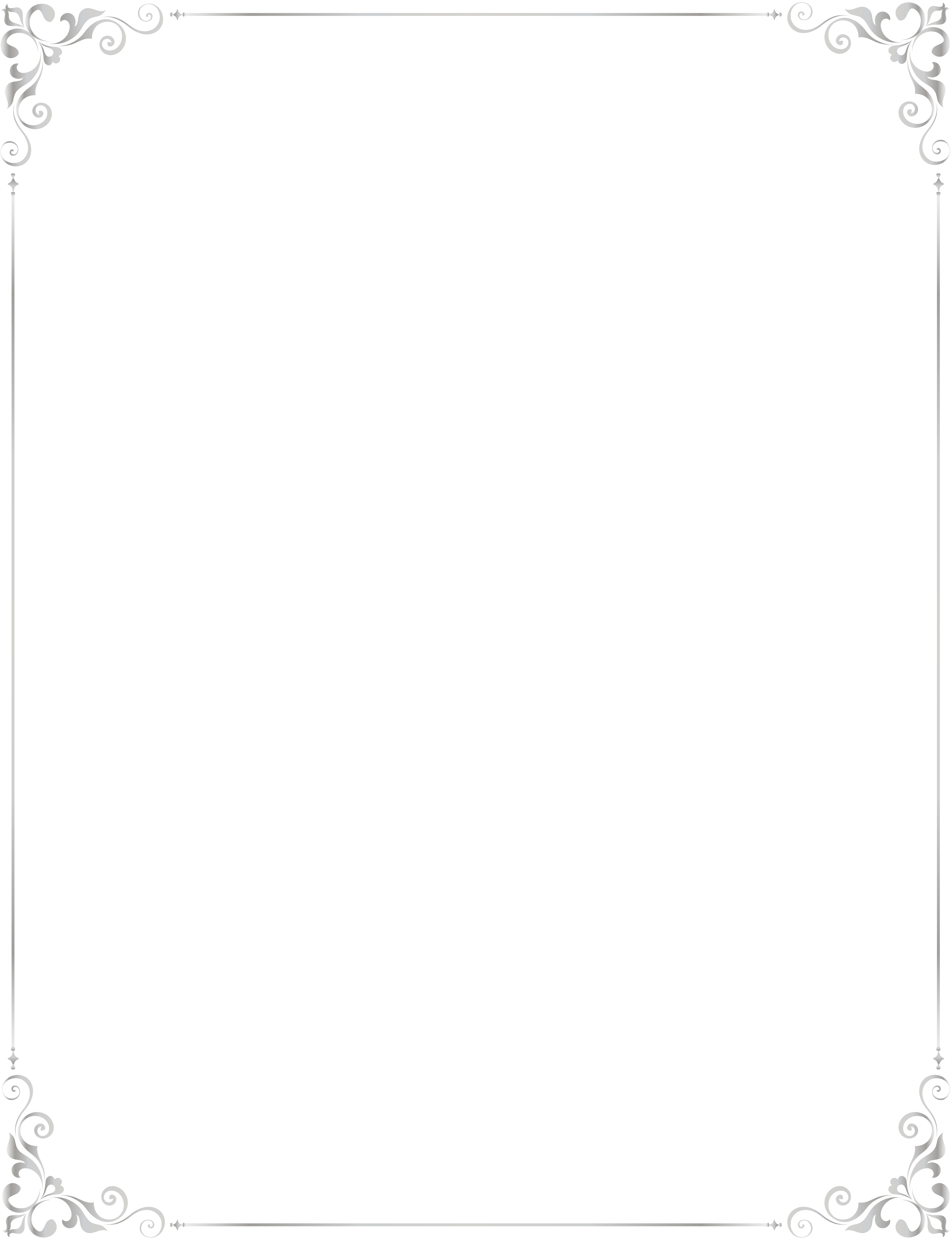

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